Pittsfield (MA) Parks Department Scrapbooks

Scanned through a Pittsfield Community Preservation Act Grant 2021

Pittsfield Parks Department Scrapbook 1998



Photo by David Bruneau

1/3/98

Common occurrence

Michael Carroll, left, and John Cooney, both of Pittsfield, have the First Street Common all to themselves for some hockey practice yesterday.

Lake skating rink idea doesn't float

1/15/98

A proposal to arrange public skating on Pontoosuc and Onota lake generated only lukewarm support at Monday's parks commission meeting.

City councilor James Boyle got the commission to agree to explore the idea but didn't find many supporters.

"We flood the Common for skating and a lot of time goes into ... but the next day the sun comes out and melts it all," said Boyle. "We should take advantage of the lakes."

Boyle argued that once skating areas are set up on frozen lakes, maintenance is quick and easy.

"If you set these up, a lot of people will take advantage of them," said Boyle.

Parks commission member Cliff Nilan expressed concerns about liability at an unsupervised lake site and noted that the parks commission does not have jurisdiction over the lakes.Community services director Bob Mellace concurred that liability and safety concerns would need to be addressed.

Parks commissioner Ben Kaplan opposed the plan, saying "this is a little overkill." He instead advocates putting resources into upgrading the skating area at the Common.

Corrections

The Pittsfield Short Track Speed Skating Championships at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Skating Rink in North Adams Sunday at noon will be sponsored by the Pittsfield Parks Speed Skating Club and the Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee Inc. of the Department of Community Services/Parks and Recreation. The sponsoring organization was given incorrectly in a headline in yesterday's Eagle.

2/13/98



Photo by David Bruneau

1/3/98

Upward bound

Sledders use the newly reactivated Osceola Park rope tow to reach the top of the hill yesterday. The rope tow will operate Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 1 to 5 p.m.

Winterfest scheduled for Springside

PITTSFIELD — The second annual Winterfest will be held at Springside Park this Saturday from 11 to 3. Rain date is this Sunday.

Among the activities, weather permitting, will be animal-track and tree identification, cross-country skiing, snow shoeing, skating, a cardboard sled contest, and a snow sculpture contest.

Cocoa and other refreshments will be provided. Admission is free to all events. Winterfest is sponsored by the Vincent J. Hebert Arboretum.

Animal-track exploration and identification will begin at noon with naturalist Victor C. Capelli, and tree identification will start at 1 with urban forester Ken Gooch.

Judging for the snow sculptures near Springside House at 874 North St. will be at 2:30.

Information: 443-5348 or 499-9343.

1/20/98

Key dates listed for Winter Carnival

PITTSFIELD — Clark Nicholls, chairman of the Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee Inc., has announced a list of upcoming events scheduled for this year's 53rd annual Winter Carnival.

- **Queen Contest and Button Sales:** Friday, Jan. 23, through Feb. 23. Laurie Mantegari, coordinator;
- **Toboggan Race:** Saturday, Jan. 31, 11 a.m., Osceola Park, Ron Przedpelski, coordinator;
- **Family Day:** Sunday, Feb. 1, 11 a.m., Controy Pavilion, Burbank Park, Onota Lake; fishing derby begins at 7 a.m., Ron Przedpelski, coordinator;
- **City Ski Meet:** Saturday, Feb. 7, 10 a.m., Bousquet Ski Area, Dave Melle, coordinator;
- **Cross Country Ski Races:** Sunday, Feb. 8, 9 a.m., Canterbury Farm, Becket, Dennis Barry, coordinator;
- **Automobile Ice Time Trials:** Saturday, Feb. 14 and 15, 9 a.m. Controy Pavilion, Burbank Park, Onota Lake, Clark Nicholls, coordinator;
- **Indoor Short Track Speed Skating:** Sunday, Feb. 15, noon, Vietnam Veterans Skating Rink, North Adams, Carl and Pat Peaslee, coordinators;
- **Anything Goes Sled Races:** Saturday, Feb. 21, 11 a.m., Clapp Park, Dave Melle, coordinator;
- **Queen's Coronation Ball:** Friday, Feb. 27, 9 p.m., Itam Lodge, Laurie Mantegari, coordinator;
- **Citywide Snow Sculpture Contest:** Dates to be announced. Dave Melle and Ron Przedpelski, coordinators.

Information: Nicholls, 243-3433.

1/21/98

Carnival cross country ski race Feb. 8

The Pittsfield Winter Carnival has scheduled its annual cross country freestyle ski race Sunday, Feb. 8, at Canterbury Farm Cross Country Ski Center in Becket.

A $50 gift certificate from Plaine's Bike Golf Ski will go to the top overall male and female finishers in the 5-kilometer event. There will be competition in several age and gender divisions, with trophies and ribbons awarded to top finishers.

On-site registration begins at 9 a.m. and the racing begins at 10. A one-kilometer fun race for young children follows. There is no registration fee for any of the races. Free T-shirts go to the first 25 who register.

Information: Dennis Barry (499-7697), Dave Drugmand (623-6651) or Canterbury Farm (623-0100).

1/26/98

Auto ice trials at Onota this weekend

2/13/98

Automobiles will dot Onota Lake tomorrow and Sunday (weather permitting) as the Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee hosts the 41st ice trials as part of Pittsfield's 53rd Annual Winter Carnival. The event is held in cooperation with the Killington Sports Car Club.

The competition, open to licensed drivers and all types of automobiles, starts Saturday and Sunday mornings with registration at 9 a.m. at the Controy Pavilion at Burbank Park off Lakeway Drive. Timed runs will begin at 11, with course familiarization at 10. Each day is a separate event.

The event is a test of driving skills on ice, and since each car runs separately, there is no danger of collision. The winding course is one to two miles long.

Trophies will be awarded for the top third of each class. The classes are as follows, with each class duplicated for studded tires: Front engine with rear wheel drive; front engine with front wheel drive; rear engine with rear wheel drive; 4 wheel drive; other specialized vehicles.

Helmets (loaners are available) must be worn and seatbelts used. The entry fee is $20. Clark Nicholls of Lee is the chairman.

North Adams rink to sponsor races

NORTH ADAMS — The Pittsfield Parks Speed Skating Club and the Winter Sports Committee of the Department of Community Services/Parks and Recreation will sponsor the Pittsfield Short Track Speed Skating Championships on Sunday, at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Skating Rink.

The free races will begin at noon.

Classes are set up according to age groups, the youngest being pee wee for skaters under 8, and this year, a new class for those over 60.

The event, part of the 53rd Pittsfield Winter Carnival, will draw skaters from throughout the eastern section of the county.

2/12/98

Winter Sports Committee lists events for annual family day

1/30/98

PITTSFIELD — The Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee Inc. will hold its annual family day this Sunday at Burbank Park, Onota Lake.

The Frank Controy Pavilion will be the headquarters for all activities which will run from noon to 4, with the exception of the ice fishing derby, which will begin at 7 a.m.

In the derby, there will be a grand prize for largest fish; 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place for men, women, boys and girls; and largest fish of any species for each division.

All fish, regardless of size, are to be brought in for weighing and measuring by 3 p.m. Only one prize per person will be allowed.

A $2 entry fee will be charged for adults; children can take part for free. Registration is from 7 to 11.

Sliding and skating races will begin between 1 and 2. Any type skates will be allowed and any type sliding device. Age groups will be 11 and 12, 8 to 10, 6 and 7, and under 6.

Children in the under-6 age group must be accompanied by an adult. Registration at the pavilion for sliding and skating will be from 11 to 12:30 and a parent signature is required. There is no charge.

Trophies will be awarded in each division. Ice skating races are under the direction of Carl Peaslee and sled races will be run by Dave Melle.

A golf on ice tournament will begin at noon with registration at the pavilion. Trophies will be awarded for the top three scorers. Horseshoes on ice will also begin at noon.

A snow sculpturing contest for families and organizations will begin at noon with cash prizes awarded to first, second and third place winners.

Richie Powers of Enticing Sculpture will do ice sculpture demonstrations throughout the day.

Snowshoe races

Snowshoe races are scheduled for 2:30 while kite flying will take place throughout the day.

In addition to competitive activities, there will be free balloons, wagon rides and a hot air balloon ride. The Pittsfield Fire Department will have a fire engine on display.

All children entered in various activities will receive a free hot dog and hot chocolate. Refreshments will also be available for purchase at the pavilion for a nominal fee. The kitchen is under the direction of Patricia Peaslee.

Access to the event must be made via the Lakeway Drive entrance to Burbank Park off Valentine Road. Absolutely no one will be allowed in the Peck's Road entrance.

Family Day activities are sponsored by the Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee of the Department of Parks & Recreation as part of their 53rd annual winter carnival.

Information: Ron Przedpelski, 443-1617, or the Department of Parks & Recreation, 499-9443.

City toboggan races set for Saturday

The city's annual toboggan races will be held Saturday from noon to 4 p.m. at Osceola Park as part of the 53rd annual Pittsfield Winter Carnival.

Ronald D. Przedpelski, chairperson of the event, said the meet will consist of events for two, three and four person toboggans. Each toboggan will make two runs and the better time will be recorded. Racers may enter more than one category. Trophies will be awarded to the first three top finishers in each category.

Przedpelski said that only U-shaped wooden toboggans will be permitted.

Proper wax should be applied, according to snow and weather conditions.

People participating should wear heavily padded clothing.

The event is open to all and toboggans will be available for loan.

Entry forms will be available at Osceola Rope Tow from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Races are scheduled to start at noon sharp. Applicants under 18 years of age must have a parent's signature on the entry blank.

1/29/98

5 earn speed skating club honors

Five members of the Pittsfield Parks Speed Skating Club have earned achievement awards.

The winners were: Sara Flynn, novice of the year; Kim Conant, novice of the year; Hillary Smith, most improved; Brandon Sorel, rookie of the year; and Tyler Farry, sportsmanship.

5/25/98



Winter Carnival buttons this year will bear this design by Adam Rousseau, an 11th-grader.

Taconic student designs Winter Carnival button

PITTSFIELD — Laurie A. Mantegari and Tonia Depson, organizers of this year's button design contest, have announced that Adam Rousseau, an 11th-grade student from Taconic High School, has won the 1998 Winter Carnival button design contest.

The button design, which depicts two children with an oversized snowball, was chosen from over 70 entries submitted to the Winter Sports Committee by children from the city's elementary, middle and high schools.

Category winners were also chosen according to grade. In the K-2 category, Alicya Hubbard from Crosby Elementary School was the winner. Callie O'Brien from Williams School was the Grade 3-5 category winner. In the Grade 9-12 category, Justin Sukiennik from Taconic High School was the winner. Each category winner received a $25 Berkshire Mall gift certificate.

The contest is sponsored by the Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee Inc. of the Department of Community Service, Parks and Recreation. Buttons are sold by contestants for Winter Carnival queen, and proceeds help pay for carnival events.

Buttons go on sale Friday, Jan. 23. 1/17/98

Free family day events scheduled Sunday afternoon at Burbank Park

Old-fashioned fun with new twists will be the theme Sunday during Pittsfield's annual winter family day.

Sponsored by the winter sports committee, the event includes numerous free competitions at Burbank Park on Onota Lake.

Races will include sledding, skating and snowshoeing. Other activities include a fishing derby, snow sculpture competition, golf on ice, wagon rides and — weather permitting — hot air balloon rides.

All children will receive a free balloon. Children who enter any competitions will also rceceive a free hot dog and free hot chocolate.

The only event with a fee is the adult fishing derby. A $2 entry fee is required for participants.

Headquarters for the festivities will be at the Controy Pavilion. Motorists should arrive via Lakeway Drive off Valentine Road. No access will be allowed via Pecks Road.

Highlights include:

Fishing Derby. Prizes will be awarded in various categories. All participants must register to be entered. Fish should be brought in for weighing and measuring by 3 p.m. While adults must pay a $2 entry fee, children are free.

Sliding & Skating Races. Races will begin between 1 and 2 p.m. Any type skates and sliding devices will be allowed. Age groups will be: 11 & 12, 8-10, 6 & 7 and under 6 (must be accompanied by an adult). Carl Peaslee is coordinator of skating races; Dave Melle is in charge of sled races. Trophies will be awarded.

Golf on Ice. Participants in the golf on ice tournament must register in the pavilion. Tee time is noon. Trophies will be awarded to the top three scorers.

Snow Sculpturing. A competition for families and organizations begins at noon. Cash prizes will be awarded to first, second and third place winners.

Horseshoes, Snowshoes & Kites. Horseshoes on ice begins at noon; snowshoe races start at 2:30 p.m.; kite-flying will run throughout the day.

The fire department will be on hand offering youngsters a chance to see a fire engine.

Free wagon rides will also be available.

Patricia Peaslee is supervising a concession which will sell refreshments and provide complimentary treats for youngsters in competitions.

For additional information, call the parks department at 499-9343 or event chairman Ron Przedpelski at 443-1617.

Family Day • Sunday, Feb. 1
Burbank Park, Onota Lake

• Ice Fishing Derby Registration	7 - 11 a.m.
• Ice Fishing Derby* ($2 entry)	7 a.m. - 3 p.m.
• Skating & Sled Race Registration	11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
• Sled Races*	1 p.m.
• Skating Races*	2 p.m.
• Golf On Ice Tournament*	noon - 3 p.m.
• Snow Sculpture Competition*	noon - 3 p.m.
• Wagon Rides	noon - 4 p.m.
• Fire Department Fire Truck	noon - 4 p.m.
• Bonfire	noon - 4 p.m.
• Horseshoes on Ice	noon - 3 p.m.
• Hot Air Balloon Rides	noon - 3 p.m.
• Snowshoe Races*	2:30-3:30 p.m.
• Kite Flying Contest*	noon - 3 p.m.

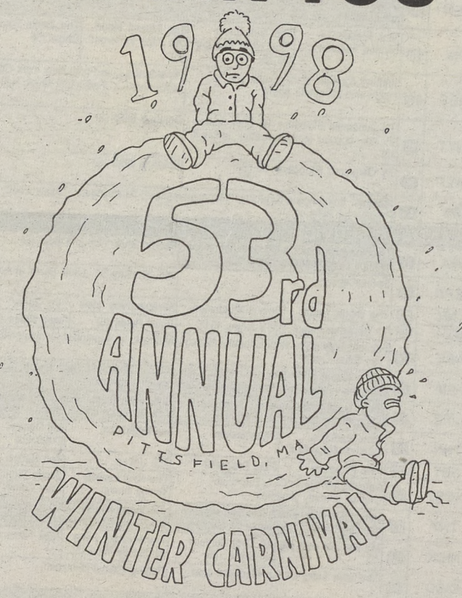
*Awards for winners

All events free of charge, except $2 fee for adult entrants in the Ice Fishing Derby.

Family Day is sponsored by the Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee.



THANK YOU



Thank You to all the VOLUNTEERS and SPONSORS who helped pull off the 53rd Annual Winter Carnival

2/26/98

From the Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee and the Department of Community Services/Parks & Recreation

Winter Carnival a major success

To the Editor of THE EAGLE:—

The Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee has again presented a wonderful array of winter outdoor events this year. My family enjoyed the toboggan races at Osceola Park and the family day at Onota Lake. We particularly enjoyed the cross-country ski meet at Canterbury Farm in Becket.

Most recently the committee also put on an Anything Goes sled race at Clapp Park. There was very little snow on the hill at the park this year. Members of the Pittsfield Fire Department worked diligently to bring in truck loads of snow to provide a sled run for the children to enjoy. This made for a wonderful day for all who were there.

The community is fortunate to have people the quality of Dave Melle, Ron Przedepelski and the rest of the Winter Sports Committee that work so hard to present this city with such a spectacular, family-oriented, Winter Carnival.

THOMAS W. GOGGINS
44 Thomas Place
Pittsfield, Feb. 22, 1998

3/1/98

VICTOR CAPELLI
Winter at Springside

In the dead of winter, when all is cold and still, Springside Park becomes a tundra of the north. Into the stark landscape of the park, I skied thus, when the powder was deep and nobody, it seemed, was around, not even the roar of snowmobile was heard. After parking my car, I took out my skis, waxed them thoroughly and started out behind Springside House, down below Observatory Hill.

The air was sharp and brisk, with the temperature in the 20's, but there was no wind as I schussed down into the trail between Steven's Pond and Lower Pond. The snowmobile's old track proved to be challenging, as my skis fought for purchase on the slippery trail. I turned right, up the hill next to Steven's Pond and across the Main Road.

The cattails of the pond made a pretty array of brown stalks, each capped with a little snow, like "natural" cappuccino, that you probably would not find in your local coffee house.

I paused in my ascent, to look back down into this frozen wetland, where turtles and frogs and salamanders lay sleeping deep beneath a secure crust of mud and ice.

The black willows, sugar maples and quaking aspens were like brown etchings against the cold, blue winter sky. I skied on, over the Main Road and turned north, parallel to the ball field, and across a deep field of unbroken snow. As I glided on the deep powder, I took in the sights of Reid Middle School; its's jutting red chimney, like a finger into the blue canopy of space. The voices of playing children in the adjacent schoolyard carried clearly across the cold air.

Skiing further, I crossed over one of the innumerable trails of the 231 acre park and over Swamp Brook and into the woods towards the "Dark Pines." The stillness of the winter landscape was breathtaking, as black cherries, maples, oaks and other species of tree (there are over 45 species of trees in the park) made dark aisles of shadow against the deep snow along the trail. Nuthatches, woodpeckers and chickadees flittered and pecked busily on the branches above my head, as I skied into this "wilderness" of winter "unnatural" sounds in this "Hansel and Gretal" land of silence and beauty. A journey of winter visions.

The brooding quiet of the Dark Pines was reminiscent of the ancient peace and quiet in the old forests of New England and Canada; especially the landscapes of the Quetico-Superior Wilderness around the Great Lakes. Reaching the top of the trail, I turned left and down across the Main Road again, into the open fields and meadows of spirea, blackberry, blueberry bushes, staghorn sumac and Red Oak trees. I paused to catch my breath, the exhalations instantly crystallizing in the arctic-like air.

I pushed on, back along the Main Road, towards the ball fields, parking areas and the center of Springside Park. The skis made a hiss against the powder that was so loud, I almost failed to pick up the shrieking cry of the Red-Tail, as he circled high in the clouds. The Hawk's brilliant reddish tail and pale white breast was clearly identifiable, and he is one of the year round resident raptors of the park.

Back at the car, I peeled off one of my sweaters, soaked with sweat after nearly three hours of skiing, and applied another coat of wax to the tips and tails of my battered Peltonens.

Before getting back into the car, I paused to drink in the scenery around me; the dark evergreens, the actinic brightness of the snow, the nearby Taconic hillss, The Berkshires.

Springside Park, even in the harsh season of winter, it's beauty shines like a frosty jewel in the crown of Berkshire County parks. 2/5/98

Button design contest under way

PITTSFIELD — The Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee Inc. of the Department of Parks and Recreation has started the 54th annual Button Design Contest.

Design forms have been delivered to the Pittsfield public and Catholic schools. Also, the forms can be found at the Pittsfield CYC, Boys' and Girls' Club, Girls Inc. and Pittsfield YMCA.

All entries must be in by Monday, Oct. 19, and should be mailed or brought to the Department of Recreation, 874 North St., or individual school offices.

The Winter Sports Committee will judge the entries at the Pittsfield Winter Sports meeting on Oct. 21 at 7:30 p.m.

Information: Laurie A. Mantegari at 442-5352. 10/11/98

Field of 16 begins quest for carnival queen honors

PITTSFIELD — The 53rd annual Winter Carnival Queen Contest kicked off yesterday afternoon with a luncheon at Giovanni's Ristorante. The contestants and their mothers were guests of the Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee Inc.

Chairwomen of the event are Laurie Mantegari and Tonia Depson. Following the luncheon, the 16 queen contestants began selling their required minimum of 1,000 Winter Carnival buttons to be eligible to contend for the title of 1998 Winter Carnival queen.

The selection will be made Friday, Feb. 27, at the Queen's Coronation Ball, to be held at the Itam Lodge. Three judges will make their selections based on poise, appearance, personality, expression and understanding of the Winter Carnival activities.

Two contests

The sale of buttons is a separate contest and has no bearing on the judging of the queen or lady-in-waiting.

Each contestant will receive a bag of gifts donated by local merchants, banks, and the Winter Sports Committee. This year the queen will receive a $1,000 scholarship to the school of her choice.

The contestant selling the most buttons will receive a special award.

If the top button seller exceeds the all-time-high button amount (1995, Brandi Lee, 7,400) she will have her choice of a $1,000 gift or $1,000 scholarship to the school of her choice. Contestants will choose a Miss Congeniality, who will receive an appropriate remembrance.

This year's contestants include:

◗ **Jacqueline Ann Auge,** 17, daughter of Gene and Karen Auge of Pittsfield. Auge is a senior at St. Joseph's Central High School, where she is captain of the girl's varsity basketball team, a member of the school's photo club, and the yearbook photographer. She is also a member of the Spirit/Retreat Team and the 100 Nights Club.

This year will be her fourth year singing and dancing in the school's musical. She tutors at St. Mark Middle School and has been employed by Jimmy's Restaurant for three years.

She plans to attend Berkshire Community College, majoring in photography, and to operate her own studio.

◗ **Shay A. Barnes,** 17, daughter of Shari A. Pleiter of Pittsfield. Barnes is a senior at Taconic High School, where she has performed in plays and is a member of the chorus. Other activities include cross country skiing. She has performed at the Berkshire Public Theater since the age of 7 and volunteers her time with both the winter and summer Special Olympics. She also tutors at Crosby Elementary School.

She would like to attend Framingham College and major in education. Her goal is to teach English at the high school level.

◗ **Kristen Baumann,** 17, daughter of James R. Baumann Jr. and Anne Baumann of Pittsfield. A senior at Pittsfield High School, Baumann won the Chatham College Book Award. She is president of the Spanish Club, and is involved with the prom committee and peer tutoring. She is manager of the boys track team and enjoys soccer, softball and swimming.

She volunteers for Special Olympics, Habitat for Humanity, and is a teacher for Bible Camp. She is employed by Subway, which is also her sponsor.

◗ **Cara Bernardo,** 17, daughter of John Bernardo and Susan Glenn, both of Pittsfield. Bernardo is a senior at Taconic High School, where she has been involved in theater. She has been a member of the National Honor Society for two years and the Peer Resource Team for two years. She has volunteered at Berkshire Medical Center, as well as in local politics.

She has been a bookkeeper for the Berkshire Community College soccer team for several years and scorekeeper for the Pittsfield lacrosse team for one. She is employed by Stop & Shop as a cashier.

◗ **Jennifer Cahill,** 17, daughter of Patricia Salvadore and Theodore Cahill, both of Pittsfield. She is a senior at Taconic High School, where she is a member of the cross country running and track teams. Cahill is also involved with the National Honor Society, theater, Berkshire Youth United and the New England Math League.

She is a lector at St. Agnes' Church in Dalton, and volunteers for Special Olympics Winter Games. She is employed by Friendly's Restaurant. Cahill is considering Dartmouth and Boston colleges, and plans to study science and communications.

◗ **Amy Koscielniak,** 17, daughter of Joanne Walsh of Lee. She is a senior at St. Joseph's Central High School, where she is a member of the student council and performs in the school's musicals each year. She volunteers with Special Olympics and tutoring, and is also involved with her church youth group. She recently attended World Youth Day in France.

Koscielniak plans to attend college to pursue a degree in probation and correction.

◗ **Erin C. Lang,** 17, daughter of Keith and Susan Lang of Pittsfield. She is a senior at Taconic High School, where she is a student council representative, and a member of the drama club and prom committee.

Lang is also a member of the varsity soccer, swimming, and track and field teams. She is a clerk at East Street Video & Variety, and she plans to attend college and major in physical education.

◗ **Jacky Reynolds,** 17, daughter of Mark and Karen Reynolds of Pittsfield. Reynolds is a senior at Pittsfield High School, where she is a member of the swim and track teams, SIDE, French Club, and yearbook committee. She has been employed by the Boys' & Girls' Club for four years, where she is also a member of the club's swim team, teaches swim lessons, and is president of the Senior Leaders Club.

She is a candidate for Youth of the Year and is active with Special Olympics. She is also a coach for the Parks Department softball, and is a Big Sister. She is being sponsored by Reynolds Team Sales.

◗ **Nikki Riello,** 17, daughter of Joseph and Theresa Riello of Pittsfield. She is a senior at Pittsfield High School, where she is a member of the Italian Club, track team and captain of the volleyball team. She was also a member of the prom committee.

She will attend Berkshire Community College.

◗ **Jaime Robillard,** 17, daughter of Brett and Cathy MacPhail of Pittsfield and Stephen Robillard of New Jersey. Robillard is a senior at Taconic High School, where she is a member of the cross country and tennis teams and the peer resource team.

She is employed by PaineWebber and McDonald's restaurant, and plans to attend business college to become a certified public accountant.

◗ **Laura Snell,** 17, daughter of Ann and Robert Snell of Pittsfield. She is a senior at Taconic High School, where she is on the varsity soccer team and is captain of the alpine ski team. Snell is also on the Berkshire Youth United under-19 soccer team.

She volunteers with the Special Olympics and the Outdoor Exploration Program, and was a soccer coach for the Parks Department for two years. She also volunteers with a food drive every Tuesday.

◗ **Emily Niebauer,** 17, daughter of Dr. Robert J. Niebauer and Gretchen E. Niebauer of Pittsfield. She is a senior at Pittsfield High school, where she is a member of the yearbook committee, secretary of the National Honor Society, secretary of SADD, and a member of the varsity soccer and track teams.

Niebauer has volunteered as a soccer coach for the Pittsfield Parks Department for four years and as a basketball coach at the Catholic Youth Center. She plans to attend Boston College or the University of Richmond to pursue a double major in history and education.

◗ **Jackie Ostrikis,** 17, daughter of Michael and Judith Ostrikis of Pittsfield. She is a senior at Pittsfield High School, where she is a member of the swimming and track teams. She has volunteered with Special Olympics and has been involved in community service at Berkshire Medical Center. She plans to pursue a career in advertising.

◗ **Angela Stracuzzi,** 17, daughter of Angelo and Roseanne Stracuzzi of Pittsfield. She is a senior at Taconic High School and captain of the cheerleading team, and a member of the pep club and yearbook and prom committees. She is also a member of the CYC Senior All-Stars cheerleading team and a fourth-year coach of the CYC's St. Charles' bantam cheerleading team.

Stracuzzi is employed by the Berkshire Plaza Hotel as a reservationist and plans to attend college in hotel and restaurant management/business.

◗ **Barbara Van Deusen,** 17, daughter of Richard and Linda Van Deusen of Pittsfield. She is a senior at Taconic High School, where she is on the cross country team and yearbook committee. She is involved with Shakespeare & Company, and is employed by Allen Heights Veterinary Hospital as a receptionist. She plans to attend Berkshire Community College to study to be a veterinary technician.

◗ **Jennifer Jean Vincent,** 17, daughter of Richard and Linda Vincent of Pittsfield. Vincent is a senior at Taconic High School, where she is a member of the cheerleading team and played softball and volleyball. She volunteers at the Christian Center and Berkshire Place. She plans to attend Berkshire Community College in the physical therapy assistant program.



Shartrand Photography

Contestants and last year's queen are, from left to right, bottom row: Jaime Robillard, Barbara Van Deusen, Angela Stracuzzi, 1997 Queen Lori Hall, Laura Snell, Erin Lang, and Jacky Reynolds. Top row, from left to right: Cara Bernardo, Kristen Baumann, Nikki Riello, Jennifer Cahill, Emily Niebauer, Shay Barnes, Jacqueline Auge, Amy Koscielniak and Jennifer Vincent. Missing from photo is 1997 Lady-in-Waiting Jennifer Slonski and contestant Jackie Ostrikis.

Skating lessons to be offered

PITTSFIELD — The Pittsfield Parks Speedskating Club in conjunction with the Department of Parks and Recreation will conduct their annual Learn-to-Skate program beginning Dec. 28.

The program will run from Monday through Thursday, Dec. 28 through 31, and will be held from 11:45 to 12:45 at the Pittsfield Boys' and Girls' Club on Melville Street.

Skaters are required to wear helmets, gloves and knee and elbow pads. They should dress warmly but avoid loose, baggy clothes and long scarves. No double runner skates are permitted. A limited number of skates may be rented from the Boys' and Girls' Club. Skaters must be at least 5 years old.

~~Registration will be held tomorrow evening from~~ 7 to 7:30 at the skating rink. Cost of the program is $15. 12/15/98

Carnival names sled race winners

Volunteers from the Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee and Pittsfield Fire Department shovelled snow into pickup trucks and transported the snow to the slope at Clapp Park Saturday, creating a snowy track that attracted 28 participants to the Pittsfield Winter Carnival "anything goes" sled races.

Winners were as follows:

Age 5-under: 1. Tom Goggins, 6.207; 2. Rob Leary, 6.75; 3, Myles Candelet, 7.407.
Age 6-8: 1. Connor Harrison, 5.204; 2. Tyler Cowan, 5.889; 3. Tim Goggins, 7.162.
Age 9-11: 1. Ryan Cowan, 5.387; 2. Lyndsay Roucoulet, 5.518; 3. Sarah Denley, 6.36.
Age 12-14: 1. Matt Phillips, 8.693.
Age 15-18: 1. Shaun Phillips, 6.839.
Age 30-49: 1. Ginny Goggins, 5.513; 2. Tom Goggins, 6.191.
Family: 1. Ryan, Tyler and Ken Cowan, 5.919; 2. Elizabeth, Tim and Virginia Goggins and Kallan and Conner Harrison 5.994; 3. Tom, Ginny, Elizabeth, Tim and Virginia Goggins, 6.307.

2/25/98

3.

Chairs are named for Winter Carnival coronation ball

PITTSFIELD — The Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee Inc. of the Department of Community Services has announced that Laurie A. Mantegari and Tonia M. Depson have been named chairwomen of the annual queen's coronation ball to be held on Friday, Feb. 27, at the Itam Lodge.

Police Chief Anthony Riello will be master of ceremonies at the event.

Dance music will be provided by Larry Kratka of Boogie Buggy from 9 to 1.

The ball is a culmination of the annual contest sponsored by the Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee of the Department of Community Services Parks and Recreation.

Queen contestants who have sold the required number of carnival buttons during the three weeks of button sales will be interviewed by a panel of three out-of-town judges. The judges will select the 1997 Winter Carnival queen and lady-in-waiting.

Tickets are available at the parks department office at 874 North St. and are $6 per person. Reservations: 442-5352. Tables will seat 10 people.

Coronation ball to feature Riello

PITTSFIELD — Chief Anthony Riello will be master of ceremonies at this year's Winter Carnival Queen coronation ball on Friday, Feb. 27, from 9 to 1 at the ITAM Lodge.

Riello is known locally for his past participation in the city's DARE programs and Citizens Against Child Abuse variety shows. He has also put into action a community-oriented policing program.

Riello and his wife, Christine, reside in Pittsfield and have two children.

Tickets are available at the Parks Department office at 874 North St., and are $6 per person. Reservations are suggested at 442-5352. 2/22/98

Clapp Park to hold first sled races

PITTSFIELD — The Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee will hold their first "Anything Goes Sled Races" on Saturday, Feb. 21, at Clapp Park.

Registration will begin at 10 and continue until the start of the event at 11.

There will be three age divisions as well as a family division. Emphasis will be on unusual and creative sled designs and trophies will be awarded to the top three designs chosen by this year's Winter Carnival Queen contestants.

There will also be trophies awarded to the top three timed finishers in each age category. Information: Dave Melle, 684-3050. 2/14/98

WINTER WONDERS



Christian and David Sutherland prepared a kite Sunday afternoon. Christian predicted success in the endeavor — and soon ran across frozen Onota Lake with kite aloft, true to his word.



Attempting a round of horse-shoes on a frozen lake requires strategy, as Christopher Arena can attest. Precision aiming is more important than how far one throws, since the ice extends the horseshoe's distance upon contact.

Photos by Jonathan Levine



They make it possible: Winter Carnival Queen contestants spend weeks selling buttons that pay fo events such as Family Day. On Sunday, they also helped judge snow sculptures. In front are co-chair Tonia Depson and Laurie Mantegari. Contestants include: Amy Koscelnaiak, Angela Stracuzz Laura Shell, Jackie Auge, Barb Van Dusen and Cara Bernardo.

Picture perfect weather helped the Winter Carnival Committee Family Day soar. Hot-air balloon rides were so popular that they con past designated finish time, ceasing only when the propane supply ran out.







Showing fine form during a round of frozen "golf on ice," Ruth Abele battled unusual hazards — including snow traps. Abele and her husband, Warren, found the weather perfect for their sport.

Family Day provides participants with the opportunity to learn new sports. Devin Shea, however, seemed a veteran as he zoomed across the snowshoe course.





2/1/98

Photos by Ben Garver / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Winter delight

Pittsfield Winter Carnival toboggan race entrants at Osceola Park yesterday included this jolly crew led by police Sgt. Pat Barry. Backing him are, left to right, siblings Sean Donnelly, 13, Kayla Donnelly, 15, and Terrence Donnelly, 11. At right, Timothy Bak, 5, shows equanimity after wipeout.





Joel Librizzi / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Waiting for their turn

2/2/98

The Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee hosted Family Day yesterday at Onota Lake. This group competed in sled races. Photos on Page B1.

City Ski Meet Feb. 7 at Bousquet

The Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee has scheduled the annual City Ski Meet, a Pittsfield Winter Carnival Event, Saturday, Feb. 7 at Bousquet Ski Area.

The event is open to children ages 7-13, with categories for trained and non-trained racers in both genders. Prizes for top-three finishers will be awarded in several age divisions. The best score of two runs will be used to determine winners.

Pre-registration forms will be available at Springside House, 874 North St, Pittsfield, until Friday, Feb. 6. On-site registration will begin at 9 a.m. and continue to the start of the race at 10. There is no entry fee, but racers need a parent or guardian to sign a consent form. There will be free hot chocolate for each racer.

Information: Dave Melle, 684-3050.

2/2/98

Fun for the family



Photos by Joel Librizzi / Berkshire Eagle Staff

A hot-air balloon took to the sky while a hay ride was offered for those on the ground on Family Day at Onota Lake yesterday. Below left, sled races proved eventful while Ward 5 City Councilor Rick Scapin, left, enjoyed a ride with family and friends. 2/2/98





Winter Carnival a major success

To the Editor of THE EAGLE:—

The Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee has again presented a wonderful array of winter outdoor events this year. My family enjoyed the toboggan races at Osceola Park and the family day at Onota Lake. We particularly enjoyed the cross-country ski meet at Canterbury Farm in Becket.

Most recently the committee also put on an Anything Goes sled race at Clapp Park. There was very little snow on the hill at the park this year. Members of the Pittsfield Fire Department worked diligently to bring in truck loads of snow to provide a sled run for the children to enjoy. This made for a wonderful day for all who were there.

The community is fortunate to have people the quality of Dave Melle, Ron Przedepelski and the rest of the Winter Sports Committee that work so hard to present this city with such a spectacular, family-oriented, Winter Carnival.

THOMAS W. GOGGINS
44 Thomas Place
Pittsfield, Feb. 22, 1998

3/1/98

13,308 buttons

Boosted by careful planning and cooperative weather, the Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee enjoyed is most successful season in recent memory this year, capped by this past Friday's carnival queen coronation ball.

Perhaps the most astounding element of the proceedings involved the button sales by the carnival queen contestants.

Laura Snell led the group with an amazing button total of 13,308. Angela Stracuzzi also hit the five digit mark for sales. All told, the teen contestants set a record with 45,432 button sales.

According to Laurie Mantegari, one of queen contest coordinators, the prolific button sales were a major factor in the success of other carnival events, such as the popular family day.

The button sales — totalling $22,716 — fund such "extras" as the hot air balloon that soared above Onota Lake and hay rides. In addition, the monies allow local athletes to compete at state and regional winter sport competitions.

The proceeds also go back to the queen contestants in the form of scholarships, including $1,000 for both Snell as top button seller and $1,000 for carnival queen Jackie Reynolds.

3/5/98

Saturday, December 12, 1998 —

Mantegari to be chairwoman of Winter Carnival contest

PITTSFIELD — Clark Nicholls, chairman of the Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee Inc. of the Department of Community Service, Parks and Recreation, has announced that Laurie A. Mantegari will be chairwoman of the 54th annual Winter Carnival Queen's Contest for the fourth year.

Mantegari is employed with Greylock Federal Credit Union.

The contest is open to all single girls, never married, with no children and of good moral character, ages 17 through 21 years of age, who live, attend school, or work in Pittsfield, or live in Dalton, Hancock, Lanesboro, Lenox, Richmond or Washington.

Each contestant must sell a minimum of 1,000 Winter Carnival buttons to be eligible for judging at the Queen's Coronation Ball, which has been scheduled for Friday, Feb. 26, 1999, at Itam Lodge.

A Miss Congeniality will be selected by the queen contestants and the contestant selling the most buttons will receive a special gift. The queen and lady-in-waiting also will receive special gifts. The sale of buttons is a separate contest and has no bearing on the judging of queen or lady-in-waiting.

The contestant accumulating the highest score during the judging will become queen, and the one with the second highest score, lady-in-waiting. If the highest button seller is selected queen or lady-in-waiting, she will receive an additional prize.



Laurie A. Mantegari

Application forms, contest rules and regulations, and more information on the contest may be obtained from Mantegari by calling 442-5352. Application forms also are available at the Department of Community Service, Parks and Recreation office in Springside House, 874 North St., and also at the three city high schools. There is a limit of 16 contestants and deadline for filing applications is Monday, Jan. 11, 1999.



Photo by David Bruneau

Jacky Reynolds, the 53rd Pittsfield Winter Carnival queen, is fitted with her crown Friday night by last year's queen, Lori Hall.

Jacky Reynolds is crowned 53rd Winter Carnival queen

By Theo Stein
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — Jacky Reynolds, a 17-year-old senior at Pittsfield High School, was crowned the 53rd Pittsfield Winter Carnival queen at a packed gala ball held Friday night at the Sons of Italy Itam Lodge.

Master of Ceremonies Anthony J. Riello, who daylights as the police chief, noted the overflow crowd and said it marked a welcome resurgence of spirit in the community.

Jennifer Cahill, a 17-year-old senior at Taconic High School, was crowned lady-in-waiting.

Led by Taconic's soccer and ski standout Laura Snell and Angela Stracuzzi, also of Taconic and voted Miss Congeniality, the 16 contestants sold an incredible 45,432 Winter Carnival buttons — more than one for every city resident — crushing the record set 16 years ago.

The money helps support carnival events, like the annual sled race last weekend at Clapp Park, which Parks Director Robert Mellace noted was run on a man-made course of snow that volunteers had constructed in a sea of brown mud.

Both Snell, who sold 13,308 buttons, and Stracuzzi, who sold 10,721, eclipsed the previous all-time high single sales mark of 7,400 buttons set in 1995.

For their efforts, Snell was awarded a $1,000 scholarship and Stracuzzi a $500 scholarship. Each contestant had to sell more than $1,000 worth of buttons.

Reynolds, a member of the PHS swim and track teams, is also a coach for the Parks Department softball league. She is a member of the French Club, the Yearbook Club and volunteers her time as a Big Sister.

Cahill, a member of the Taconic cross country and track teams, is a National Honor Society member, as well as a member of Berkshire Youth United and the New England Math League.

The contestants were judged by a panel of three on their poise, personality, appearance and knowledge of the Winter Carnival.

The other contestants, all winners, were: Jacqueline A. Auge of St. Joseph's High School, Shay A. Barnes of Taconic High School, Kristen Baumann of PHS, Cara Bernardo of Taconic, Amy Koscielniak of St. Joseph's, Erin C. Lang of Taconic, Emily Niebauer of PHS, Jacqueline Ostrikis of PHS, Nikki Riello of PHS, Jaime Robillard of Taconic, Barbara Van Deusen of Taconic and Jennifer Jean Vincent of Taconic.

Riello singled out Laurie E. Mantegari and Tonia M. Depson for their hard work in organizing the event, which is sponsored by the Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee Inc. and the Department of Community Services, Parks and Recreation.

3/17/98

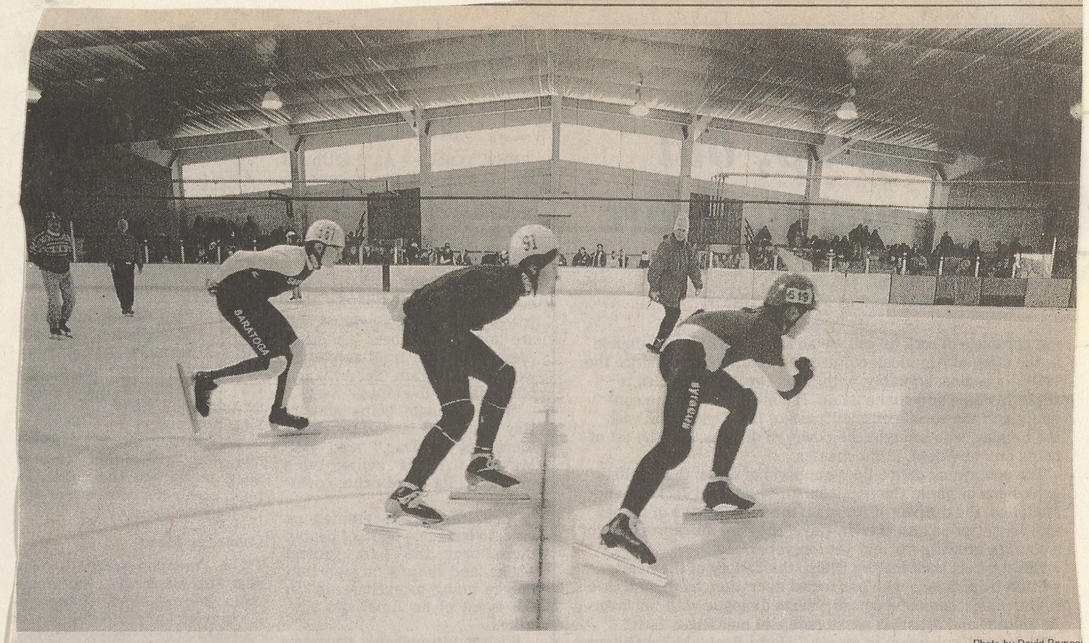


Photo by David Bruneau

Juvenile Division boys, from left, Danny Brome of Saratoga Springs, N.Y., Stephen Glynn of Braintree and Chris Thomas of Syracuse, N.Y., take part in an early race at the Pittsfield Indoor Speed Skating Championships on Sunday in North Adams. Glynn won this race, but Brome won the division title, with Thomas second and Glynn third.

Saratoga club wins speed skating title

Pittsfield club second, has six winners in North Adams

NORTH ADAMS — Saratoga, N.Y., won the team trophy, and victories by six females helped propel the host Pittsfield Parks Speed Skating Club into second place at the annual Pittsfield Indoor Speed Skating Championships on Sunday at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Rink.

Saratoga finished with 118 points and Pittsfield had 103½.

The competition, sponsored by the Pittsfield club and the Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee of the Department of Recreation, attracted 79 skaters.

Carl and Pat Peaslee of Pittsfield chaired the event, and awards were presented by Pittsfield Winter Carnival queen Laurie Hall.

The overall category victories by Pittsfield skaters included Mary Lou DiNicola in Grand Master Women, Caroline Holland in Midget Girls, Sara Flynn in Pony Girls, Jaraye Pierson in Novice Adult, Kimberly Conant in Pony Boys & Girls and Tierra Peters in Pee Wee Boys & Girls.

Top finishers in each category were as follows:

Veterans Men: 1. Howard Ganong, Clifton Park, N.Y.; 2. Jack Mahoney, Hickesville, N.Y.; 3. Paul Dillon, Glenmont, N.Y.

Grand Master Men: 1. Gary Raga, Saratoga Springs, N.Y.; 2. Ed Basinski, Pittsfield.

Masters Men A: 1. Chris Hawkins, Marlboro, N.Y.; 2. Bryan Anderson, West Haven, Conn.; 3. Al Forsyth, New Milford, Conn.

Masters Men B: 1. Bill Eisenmenger, Brookfield, Conn.; 2. Mark Pierson, Pittsfield.

Senior Men A: 1. Jim Cooley, Saratoga Springs; 2. Brian Boudreau, Everett; 3. Jose Ardilla, Somerville.

Senior Men B: 1. Joseph Trask, Walpole; 2. Robert Guarino, West Haven, Conn.

Junior Boys: 1. Adam Duncan, Syracuse, N.Y.; 2. Jeremy Stern, Jericho, N.Y.; 3. Bob Lino, East Boston.

Juvenile Boys: 1. Danny Brome, Saratoga Springs; 2. Chris Thomas, Syracuse; 3. (tie) Jonathan Winter, New Haven, Conn., and Stephen Glynn, Braintree.

Midget Boys: 1. Alex Strauss, Saratoga Springs; 2. Daniel Gaffey, White Plains, N.Y.

Pony Boys: 1. (tie) Hayden Marshall, Syracuse, and Paul Valle, Saratoga Springs; 2. Matthew Hickson, Norwood; 3. Aaron Kapp, Saratoga Springs.

Pee Wee Boys: 1. Cory Green, Yonkers, N.Y.; 2. Brandon Sorel, Pittsfield; 3. Jaryn Pierson, Pittsfield.

Senior Women A: 1. Stacy Clever, Saratoga Springs; 2. Tara Causgrove, Syracuse.

Senior Women B: 1. Christie Smith, Pleasantville, N.Y.

Grand Master Women: 1. Mary Lou DiNicola, Pittsfield; 2. Barbara Blum, Albany, N.Y.

Master Women: 1. Liz Marchese, Coxsackie, N.Y.

Juvenile Girls: 1. Solrun Hafthorsdottir, Watertown; 2. Stephanie Deldo, Lake Placid, N.Y.; 3. Nicolette Martin, Abington.

Midget Girls: 1. Caroline Holland, Pittsfield; 2. Amanda Flynn, Pittsfield; 3. Jayla Farry, Pittsfield.

Pony Girls: 1. Sara Flynn, Pittsfield; 2. Hilary Smith, Pittsfield; 3. Virginia Burns, Syracuse.

Pee Wee Girls: 1. Kara Cannizzaro, Cazenovia, N.Y.; 2. Karin Green, Middletown, Conn.; 3. Briana Flynn, Pittsfield.

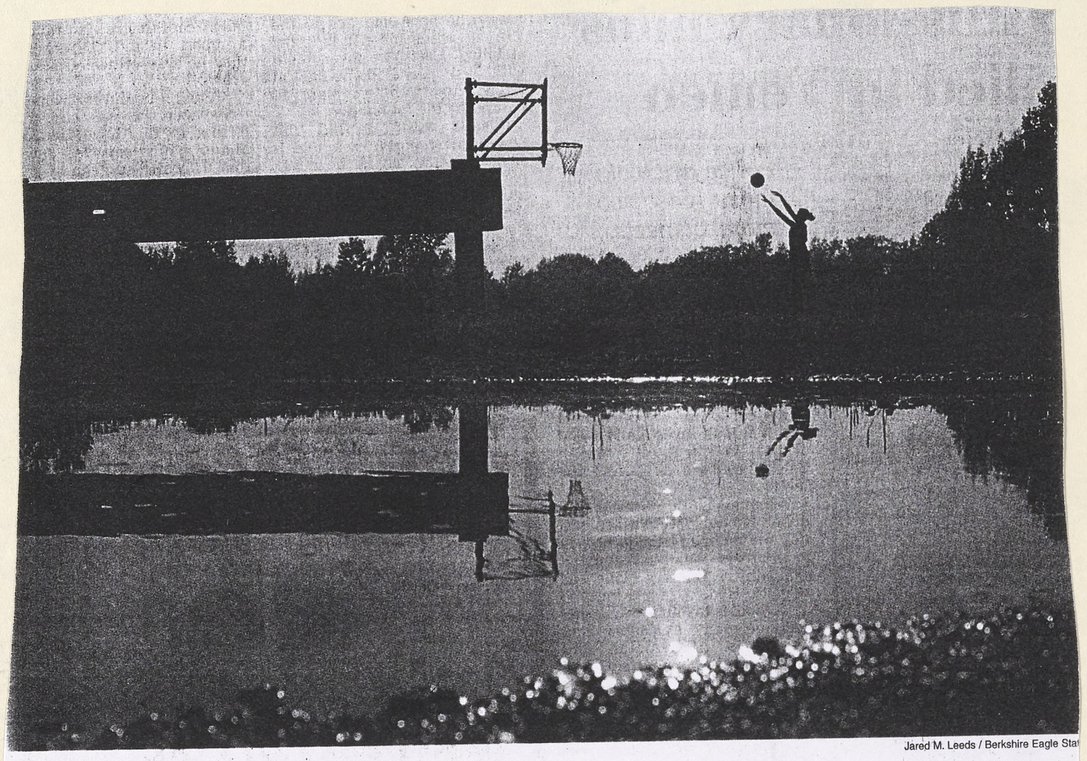
Novice Adult: 1. Jaraye Pierson, Pittsfield; 2. Marjie Cohan, Pittsfield; 3. Beth Emery, Middletown, Conn.

Junior Girls: 1. Denise Venezio, Saratoga Springs.

Juvenile Boys: 1. Eric Rollins, Dorchester.

Pony Boys & Girls: 1. Kimberly Conant, Pittsfield; 2. Alexander Merchant, Pittsfield.

Pee Wee Boys & Girls: 1. Tierra Peters, Pittsfield; 2. Matthew Wells, Pittsfield; 3. Tiffanie Wills, White Plains, N.Y.



Jared M. Leeds / Berkshire Eagle Staf

Twilight play

A girl shoots baskets at Henry Marchisio Memorial Park on Dalton Division Road in Pittsfield.

7/28/98

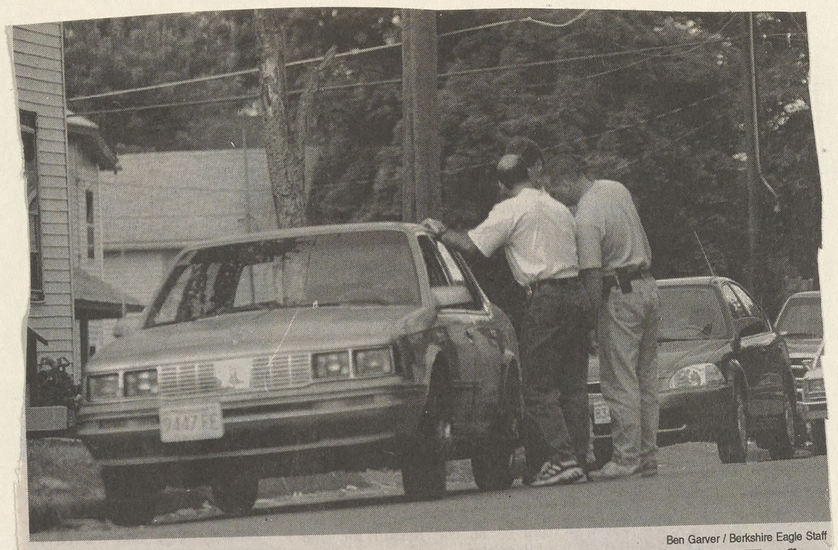


Joel Librizzi / Berkshire Eagle Staff

8/7/98

Going with the flow

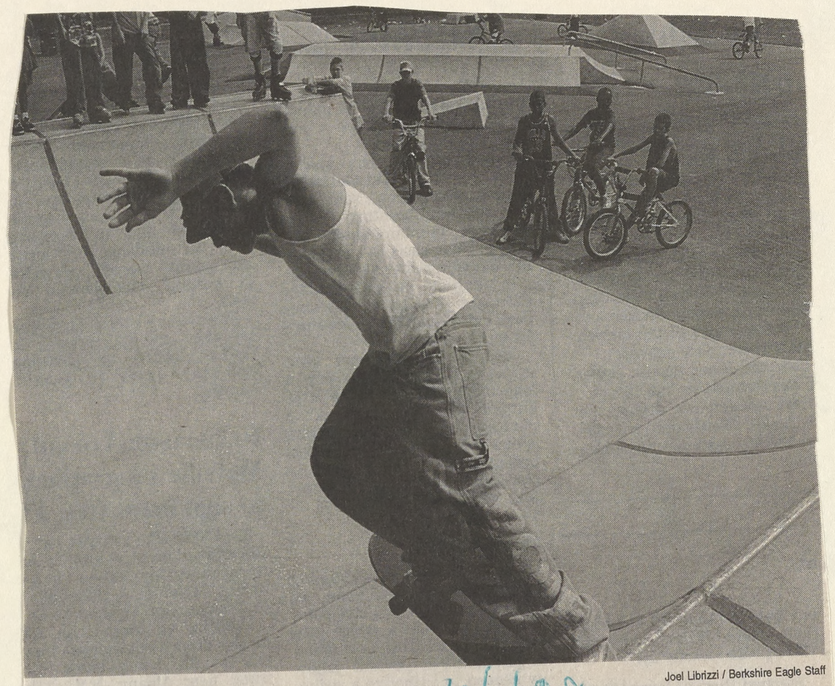
Nine-year-old Ben Howard of Pittsburgh tests the waters of the Park Square fountain in Pittsfield.



Ben Garver / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Police are shown making an arrest yesterday on Robbins Avenue in Pittsfield. The five-hour sting operation took place in Tucker Park.

8/14/98



Joel Librizzi / Berkshire Eagle Staff

10/11.98

Skating away

The skateboard park at the Common in Pittsfield was recently completed. And it hasn't taken long for area youngsters to give the new facility a try.



Craig F. Walker / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Through the tube

1/16/98

Romana Delic, 10, of Pittsfield was able to get in some play time at Pitt Park recently. Delic chose the headfirst approach to this run down the tube slide.



Ben Garver / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Channel 6 news anchor Liz Bishop broadcasts live from Park Square in Pittsfield, where the fountain was turned on yesterday for the first time in 22 years. WRGB-TV staffers are touring the station's viewing area.

'Stand for Children' to be held at Pitt Park

PITTSFIELD — The Westside Neighborhood Resource Center will host a "Stand for Children" celebration on Monday from 6 to 8 at Pitt Park, Columbus Avenue and John Street.

This year's theme is "Stand for Quality Child Care." The celebration will feature games and guest speakers including Dennis Powell, director of the Christian Center, and Barbara Hanger and Mabel Hamilton.

Information or to volunteer: 448-9768.

5/28/98



Joel Librizzi / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Shadow play

4/15/98

Isabel Gregg, 5, of Lenox and Ashleigh Scott, 6, of Maryland, who was in Pittsfield visiting her grandparents, swing in the sunshine at the Common on First Street in Pittsfield yesterday.



Ben Garver / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Beach baby

5/20/98

Samantha Zwirba, 2, of Dalton plays in the sand at Burbank Park on Onota Lake. At top of photo are the feet of her mother, Shenna Greenleaf.



Joel Librizzi / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Sled optional

They lost their sled in transit, but these sliders at Clapp Park in Pittsfield continued down the hill nonetheless.



Joel Librizzi / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Sunny scrimmage

11/29/98

Yesterday's warm weather inspired a touch football game in Pittsfield's Clapp Park.

Pittsfield Little League clinic Sunday

The Pittsfield Little League will hold a clinic for all new candidates Sunday from 9 to 1 at Taconic High School. The free clinic will be conducted by local high school coaches and players, and door prizes will be awarded.

Information: Department of Parks and Recreation, 499-9343.

3/26/98

Pittsfield Little League registration

Registration for the Pittsfield Little League will be held Saturday, March 28, from 10 to 1; Monday, March 30, and Wednesday, April 1, from 6 to 8. The program is open to players between the ages of 9 and 12.

North Little League registration will be held at the Peck's Road fire station, South Little League registration will be held at the Holmes Road fire station, while West Little League registration will be held at the Barker Road fire station.

Birth certificates must be presented at registration, and proof of residency may be required.

Little League boundaries are strictly enforced.

Information: Pittsfield Parks Department, 499-9343.

3/20/98

North Little League tryouts tomorrow

The Pittsfield North Little League has scheduled tryouts tomorrow at the Springside Avenue Little League field. Tryouts for 9-year-olds are at 10 a.m., for 10-year-olds at 11 and for 11- and 12-year-olds at noon.

Tryouts will continue Sunday for 9-year-olds at noon, 10-year-olds at 1 and 11- and 12-year-olds at 2:30. All candidates must attend both sessions. Anyone who has not yet registered may do so a half-hour before tryout times.

4/3/98

North Little League needs umpires

The Pittsfield North Little League is seeking umpires for the current season. Base umpires must be at least 14 years old and home plate umpires must be at least 16.

Candidates should contact league president Pat Hogan, 443-3787.

5/7/98

Little League 9-10, 11-12 tourneys will kick off soon

By Bob McDonough
Berkshire Eagle Staff

While the Berkshire County Babe Ruth age 14-15 baseball tournament continues in North Adams, countywide Little League tournaments for age divisions 9-10 and 11-12 are also set to begin.

The annual Berkshire County 9-10 Little League Jimmy Fund Tournament will be hosted by Pittsfield North at the Brown Street Field. The 13-team, single-elimination event is scheduled to begin tomorrow at 5:30 p.m. with defending champion Pittsfield West White taking on Lanesboro. Game 2 between North Adams and Lee is scheduled Friday at 5:30, but the remainder of the games will be played on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, concluding with the championship game July 26 at 1 p.m.

Also taking part in the tournament are Pittsfield South Grey and Red teams, Pittsfield North, Pittsfield West Blue, Great Barrington, Williamstown, Dalton-Hinsdale, Cheshire and Adams.

Other opening-round matchups include Pittsfield South Grey vs. Pittsfield South Red Saturday at 10 a.m., Barrington vs. West Blue Saturday at noon, Pittsfield North vs. Williamstown Saturday at 2 p.m. and Cheshire vs. Adams Sunday at noon. Dalton-Hinsdale opens against the Lanesboro-Pittsfield West White winner Sunday at 2 p.m.

A 10-run mercy rule will be in effect, and pitchers can pitch no more than three innings in any game. Over the years, this tournament has raised more than $70,000 for the Jimmy Fund to fight cancer in children.

Age 11-12 tournament

Adams and Cheshire will host the District 1 (Berkshire County) 11-12 Little League tournament, a 10-team double-elimination tournament that begins Monday, July 13. North Adams is defending champion.

Opening-round match-ups feature Dalton-Hinsdale at Adams and Great Barrington vs. Pittsfield South at Cheshire July 13; Lee vs. Williamstown at Adams and North Adams vs. Pittsfield North at Cheshire July 14. Pittsfield West plays the Barrington-Pittsfield South winner at Adams and Cheshire hosts the Dalton-Hinsdale vs. Adams winner July 15.

The tournament continues through July 24, when the championship game is scheduled in Adams. If the loser's bracket team wins on the 24th, a winner-take-all final will be July 27 in Adams.

7/8/98

Another no-hitter in Jimmy Fund tourney

7/13/98

Little League 9-10

PITTSFIELD — It was just another day in the Berkshire County age 9-10 Little League Jimmy Fund Tournament yesterday. There was another no-hitter and two more nail-biting finishes.

On Saturday, Pittsfield South Red turned the no-hitter; yesterday it was Lee.

Matt Keenan, Andrew Naventi and David Lewis combined for the no-no as Lee beat Lanesboro 6-4 in a consolation game at the Pittsfield North Field. Naventi also had a double for Lee. The winners scored four unanswered runs before Lanesboro got on the board.

On the comeback front Saturday, Pittsfield North rallied in the sixth inning to win. Yesterday, Cheshire and Dalton-Hinsdale turned in the comeback wins.

Cheshire scored a pair of runs in the bottom of the sixth inning to break an 8-8 deadlock, and went on to beat Adams 10-9. Matt Gwozdz, the third of three pitchers, got the win for Cheshire. Zachary Szpila, the second of two Adams pitchers, took the loss. Offensively, Adam Wright and Richie Soriano paced Cheshire with two hits each, while Brandon Crouse had two hits to lead Adams.

Mitchell Lewis' two-run home run in the bottom of the fourth inning broke an 8-8 tie as Dalton-Hinsdale went on to beat Pittsfield West White 11-8. Matt Hiser, the second of two pitchers got the win. Pittsfield West White used three pitchers, with Mark Ferry getting the loss. Dempsey Quinn was the offensive star for Pittsfield, with a single, two doubles, a triple and three runs batted in.

East Side Pizza wins City LL championship

PITTSFIELD — Dan Larrow pitched a complete-game one-hitter and struck out 12 to lead East Side Pizza to a 5-0 win over Itam in the City Championship on Thursday night at Deming Park.

East Side Pizza, the Pittsfield South Little League champion, scored twice in the first inning. Jeff Curry opened the inning with a bunt single and went to second on a base hit by Shane Perrault. Both runners then moved up on a wild pitch. Curry scored on a sacrifice fly by Larrow, and Dan Hermanski followed with another fly ball that plated Perrault.

East Side Pizza scored once more in the third when Perrault singled and later scored on an error, and added its final two runs in the fifth. In the fifth, Perrault beat out an infield hit and scored on a double by Larrow. Larrow went to third on an infield hit by Hermanski and scored when Chris McDonald's ground ball was booted.

Larrow walked five and allowed just a double to Mike Massery. Massery went the distance for West champion Itam, allowing seven hits and fanning six.

8/8/98

Pittsfield West White gets big win

PITTSFIELD — Pittsfield West White took care of Lanesboro in the Jimmy Fund Little League age 9-10 baseball tournament yesterday, scoring a 24-9 win. The game was stopped after five innings because of the 10-run mercy rule.

Jimmy Fund

Pittsfield West White scored one run in the first inning, six in the second, and three in the third to go up 10-0. Lanesboro bounced back with nine in the fourth, cutting the lead to a run. But Pittsfield came up with 14 runs in the bottom of the fifth inning, to end the game.

Dempsey Quinn was the winning pitcher, and he had three hits and six runs batted in. Matt D'Avella added three hits and five RBIs for the winners, while Tom Bowler and Pat Nolan also had three hits each. Mike Lucido, Matt Clement and Jeff Brodeur had Lanesboro's three hits.

7/10/98

Pittsfield West, Cheshire win openers

Little League 11-12 Tourney

A pair of big innings propelled Pittsfield West and Cheshire to opening-round victories last night in the Berkshire County age 11-12 Little League Tournament.

Pittsfield used a six-run third inning to post a 12-3 win over Great Barrington in Adams, and Cheshire jumped out to a 3-0 lead in the first en route to a 5-1 home win over Dalton-Hinsdale.

Pittsfield 12, Barrington 3

ADAMS — Mike Sullivan hit his first Little League homer, a two-run blast, and Tucker Sheran added a two-run double in Pittsfield West's six-run third inning.

The beneficiary was Dan Harrington, who pitched a three-hitter and struck out 12 to earn the win. Joe Wasuk had a double and an RBI single for the winners. For Barrington, Nick Turzak and Matt Green doubled and Matt Gasperini took the loss.

Cheshire 5, Dalton 1

CHESHIRE — Mike Bannister's two-run double triggered Cheshire's three-run first inning, and he added a solo homer in the fourth as Cheshire won its tournament opener.

Wright strikes out 8

Winning pitcher Matt Wright struck out eight, walked none and added two hits of his own.

Dalton-Hinsdale had eight hits, including three by Brendan Barschdorf, who singled in his team's only run following Andrew Murdock's triple in the fifth inning. Murdock and Alex Kennedy added two hits apiece for Dalton-Hinsdale.

7/16/98

Pittsfield South, Adams oust foes

7/17/98

Adams jumped ahead early and Pittsfield South rallied late, as both posted victories last night in the Berkshire County age 11-12 Little League tournament.

Little League 11-12 Tourney

At Beaver Bard Park in Adams, Kyle Malloy drove in four runs as host Adams eliminated Williamstown 5-2.

In Cheshire, winning pitcher Matt Tirrell belted a home run in the fifth inning to break a 2-2 tie and help Pittsfield South eliminate Pittsfield North 3-2.

Adams 5, Williamstown 2

ADAMS — Malloy had an RBI single in a two-run first inning, then he cleared the bases with a three-run double in the third to put Adams on top 5-0. That was plenty for winning pitcher Trevor Skrocki, who pitched a three-hitter, struck out four and walked one.

Mitch Wisniowski had two of Adams' seven hits off losing pitcher P.J. Van Luling, who struck out six.

South 3, North 2

CHESHIRE — Tirrell was in the middle of everything for Pittsfield South. He hit an RBI single following Mike Boino's double in a two-run third inning that put South ahead 2-0, homered to break the tie in the fifth and picked up the pitching win in relief.

North had tied the game in the top of the fifth on a two-run homer by Corey Phillips, who was hit by pitches in three other at-bats.

South starter Dan Larrow struck out seven and combined with Tirrell on a two-hitter. Tirrell had two of South's five hits.

Pittsfield teams win in Jimmy Fund event

Little League 9-10 Tourney

PITTSFIELD — Pittsfield South Red scored in five different innings and two Pittsfield North pitchers held Great Barrington to three hits as both teams went on to wins in the Jimmy Fund age 9-10 Little League tournament yesterday at Pittsfield North.

South scored runs in every inning except the second on the way to a 10-5 win over North Adams.

Pittsfield North's Clayton Pierce and Dan Whalen held Great Barrington to three hits in an 8-6 win.

Adam Simeone had two doubles and Chad Brown and Jeff Fields had two singles to lead the Pittsfield South offense. Tim Burns was the winning pitcher, allowing two hits in three innings of work.

Jason Engwer and Richard Harrington each had two hits for North Adams.

In the second game, Pittsfield North led 6-5 after two innings before scoring insurance runs in the fifth and sixth innings.

Pierce and reliever Whalen held Great Barrington to three singles.

Stefan Ogle led North with three hits. Whalen and Brian Wise each had two singles.

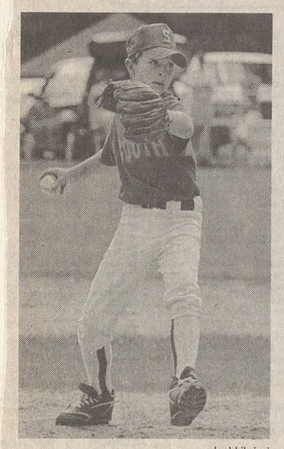
Yesterday's winners advance to Saturday's semifinals, when Pittsfield South Red will play Dalton-Hinsdle at noon and North will play Cheshire at 2. Winners go to the championship game July 26 at 1 at Pittsfield North.

7/20/98



Joel Librizzi / Berkshire Eagle Staf

Members of the Pittsfield South Red team start to celebrate after yesterday's 11-1 win over Pittsfield North in the championship game of the Jimmy Fund age 9-10 Little League tournament at Brown Street Field.



Joel Librizzi

David Glass
Hurls 2 hitless innings

South sluggers claim title

Red team whips North in age 9-10 Little League final

By Tom Ryan
Eagle Correspondent

PITTSFIELD —The championship game of the Berkshire County age 9-10 Little League Jimmy Fund Tournament yesterday at the Brown Street Field was a clash between the sluggers from Pittsfield South Red and the fireballers of Pittsfield North.

On this day, it was the South bats that were mightier than the North arms.

David Glass went 2-for-4 with two RBIs and pitched two innings of hitless relief, and Pittsfield South pounded out 12 hits to roll to an 11-1 win in a game halted after five innings because of the 10-run mercy rule.

"These kids work hard, and pick each other up a lot," said South manager Matt Stracuzzi, whose team lit up three North pitchers who had combined to pitch a no-hitter on Saturday against Cheshire. "We put the ball in play today, and both David and Tim Burns did a good job of shutting down their bats. We played good, solid baseball the whole tournament."

North scores first

North scored its lone run in the second. With one out, Justin Rivelli walked and went to second on a base hit by Brett Eksuzian. Burns then walked Adam Killian to load the bases. Paul Procopio followed with a ground ball to third, and third baseman Jeff Fields fired home in time to get the force-out on Rivelli. Eksuzian scored when Dan Whalen's ground ball was misplayed, but Burns escaped further damage when he got Stefan Oglie on a come-backer to end the inning.

South answered with three runs in the bottom of the inning. North pitcher Clayton Pierce walked Adam Simeone to open the inning. Simeone stole second and went to third on a bunt

7/27/98

FINAL, continued on C3



Joel Librizzi / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Loose ball eludes Pittsfield North catcher Kevin Robinson, left, as Pittsfield South Red runner Nick Bianchi crosses the plate in the fifth inning of his team's 11-1 win in yesterday's Little League age 9-10 Jimmy Fund Tournament championship game.

▪ Final

from C1

single by Ben Joslyn. Joslyn then stole second. John Skutnik followed with a ground-out that scored Simeone and sent Joslyn to third. Joslyn scored on a ground-out by Pat Larkin. Burns drew a walk and scored on a double by Chad Brown.

North had an opportunity to cut into the deficit in the third. With one out, Brian Wise singled. Kevin Robinson then reached on a fielder's choice, and Rivelli walked to load the bases. But Burns bore down and struck out the next hitter, and South got out of the inning when Wise ventured too far down the third-base line and was picked off trying to get back to third by South catcher Joslyn.

"That was a pretty big inning right there," said Stracuzzi. "Tim got a big strikeout, and then Ben made a great throw to get the kid going back to third."

South Red then put the game away by scoring five runs in the fourth and three more in the fifth. In the fourth, South scored once on a bases-loaded walk and Fields singled home two more. In the fifth, Chris McLaughlin and Shane Snyder had RBI singles and Glass an RBI double.

Glad a Pittsfield team won

"South brought their bats today and we didn't," said North manager David Pierce. "I'm proud of our kids for getting to the final, but Pittsfield South has got some pretty good little hitters. If anything, losing to another team from Pittsfield makes things a little easier to handle. In two years, we'll give them a run in the 11- to 12-year-old tournament."

Burns pitched the first three innings, allowing two hits and striking out three. Glass struck out three in his two innings of work.

7/27/98

North Adams 9-10s fall to Pittsfield South, 10-5

By SAM DONLON
North Adams Transcript

PITTSFIELD -- The game would go to the team that held on to the momentum the longest.

And the Pittsfield South 9-10-year all stars did just that, beating North Adams10-5 despite a strong three-run rally by North Adams.

North Adams had plenty of chances to make up the five point difference in Sunday's game in Pittsfield, stranding eight batters while two others were ousted by some smart Pittsfield defensive plays.

Down 8-2 in the fifth inning North Adams loaded the bases when Rick Harrington and Jimmy Dunn singled while Johno Hinkell got on due to a Pittsfield error in the infield. John Cipola got on base when he was hit by a pitch, sending Harrington home. The next two batters walked, sending in two more runs and still no outs.

A new Pittsfield pitcher struck

SAM DONLON
North Adams Transcript
North Adams 9-10 all-star Rick Harrington is chased down after getting caught stealing Sunday in NA's 10-5 loss to Pittsfield South.

7/20/98

See FALL, B5

FALL

From B1

out the next batter for one out. Jason Engwer, who went 2-for-4 hitting came up to the plate and delivered a long fly to right field for the second out. Seeming to have plenty of time on Engwer's hit, Cipola tagged up at third and ran for home only to be thrown out after Pittsfield's Daniel Haddad accurately rifled the ball all the way to home plate for the rally ending third out.

"That big play boosted us, got the momentum back to us," said Pittsfield coach Matt Stracuzzi, "that was the key, and getting two runs right after that."

Pittsfield increased its score in the top of the sixth when Chad Brown got on with a bunt, Brown took second and third with a steal and a wild pitch respectively. A single by Haddad and a double by Adam Simeone increased the lead to 10-5.

There would be no more rallies for North Adams as all three batters were retired in the bottom of the sixth.

Rick Harrington went 2-for-4 hitting while Jimmy Dunn and John Cipola chipped in with singles.

John Skutnic went 2-for-3 for Pittsfield with a double and a single. Chad Brown went 2-for-4 with two singles while Jeff ? went two for two with a double and a triple for two RBI. Adam Simeone went 2-for-4 with a double and a triple with two RBI and Haddad went 2-for-4 with two singles and one RBI. Tim Burns went 1-for-4 with two RBI. Dave Glass went 1-for-4 with one RBI.

7/20/98

Home runs spark West

Little League 11-12 Tourney

Pittsfield West eliminated Pittsfield South from the Berkshire County age 11-12 Little League Tournament, yesterday in Adams.

West got all its runs on home runs as Dan Evangelesi and Jake Barbarutto hit three-run home runs in a 6-2 win.

Also yesterday, Matt Wright threw a four-hitter to lead Cheshire to an 8-1 win over Great Barrington.

West 6, South 2

ADAMS — Pittsfield West took a 3-0 lead after the first inning when Evangelesi unloaded his shot.

South got two runs in the second on a two-run double from Mike Boino.

Barbarutto put the game away in the fifth with his three-run longball.

Tim Dufur was the winning pitcher, throwing six innings and allowing seven hits. Dan Larrow took the loss.

Jon Martin had two hits for South.

Cheshire 8, Barrington 1

CHESHIRE — Cheshire scored in the first four innings on the way to an 8-1 win.

Mike Banister had the big day for Cheshire with three singles and three runs batted in, including a single in the first that plated two runs. Evan Lagess and Banister scored on errors for a 4-0 Cheshire lead after the first inning.

Banister hit a run-scoring single in the second to score Curtis Crane, and Matt Wright scored on an error for a 6-0 lead.

Wright was the winning pitcher, throwing six innings. He didn't allow a hit until the fourth inning and struck out four.

Josh Rolf scored Great Barrington's lone run in the first inning on an error. Great Barrington was eliminated with the loss.

7/21/98

Pittsfield South, Barrington advance

Little League 11-12 Tourney

Matt Ward pitched a one-hitter and belted a grand slam last night to lead Pittsfield South to a 17-2 win over Dalton-Hinsdale in the Berkshire County Little League age 11-12 tournament in Cheshire.

The loss eliminated Dalton-Hinsdale.

At Beaver Bard Park in Adams, run-scoring doubles by Matt Zamberletti and Jeff Walker highlighted a pair of four-run innings as Great Barrington eliminated Adams 14-4.

South 17, Dalton 2

CHESHIRE — Dan Righi's two-run double got Pittsfield South off to a good start in a five-run first inning. Ward's grand slam highlighted an eight-run fourth inning that capped the scoring in a game ended in the fourth by the 10-run mercy rule.

Mike Boino had two singles and a double and Shane Broderick had a double and triple to lead South's 17-hit attack.

Ward surrendered only a first-inning single to losing pitcher Kevin Majchrowski.

Barrington 14, Adams 4

ADAMS — Zamberletti's two-run double highlighted a four-run first inning and Walker's RBI double sparked a four-run second as Great Barrington took an early lead and never looked back. Matt Gasperini added an RBI double in a two-run third and Josh Rolf's RBI triple highlighted a two-run sixth.

For Adams, Ryan Thomann had an RBI single in a two-run first inning and Tom Moncecchi hit a two-run homer in the second.

Ross Kellar pitched a four-hitter for the win, striking out six and walking three.

7/18/98



KRIS DUFOUR/North Adams Transcript

North Adams all-star Mark Gazaille (33) avoids the tag of Pittsfield catcher Chris Markham to score the first run of Thursday night's battle. Pittsfield went on to a 12-2 win despite the run.

Pittsfield shows no mercy in win over N.A.

By KRIS DUFOUR
North Adams Transcript

NORTH ADAMS -- Very possibly, it's a curse.

Look at it anyway you want, but this group of 14-15-year-old all-stars from North Adams has been owned by their Pittsfield counterparts over the last five years of tournament play.

Nothing changed Thursday night at Joe Wolfe Field as Pittsfield scored 12 unanswered runs to paste North Adams 12-2 in the winner's bracket final of the District 1 Babe Ruth 14-15-year-old Tournament. The game was stopped after six innings because of the 10-run mercy rule.

"We made a lot of mental mistakes," said North Adams co-coach Dan Harrison. "I think it is a curse. This group has lost to them since they were 10 years old -- I don't know if that bothers them or not."

Things started off great for North Adams. A two-run first off Pittsfield starter Matt Mazzer gave the local nine the coveted lead. But Pittsfield answered with three in its half of the first and went on to add three in the third, fifth and sixth innings.

North Adams will now face the winner of today's Adams-South Central loser's bracket game Saturday at 1 p.m.

A two-out walk to Mark Gazaille sparked the North Adams rally in the first. Mazzer then walked Aaron Herr on a 3-2 pitch before Matt Wooliver cued a single up the middle to score Gazaille. Matt Rodovick then hit a dribbler toward short which was misplayed, allowing Herr to score.

But Rodovick struggled with his control all night. He walked the first three batters he faced, loading the bases. After striking out Brent White for the first out, Brendan Welteroth lined a bases-clearing double into the left-centerfield gap to give Pittsfield the lead for good at 3-2.

"We lost the lead and the momentum there," said Harrison. "They got on top and that's where they like to be. Once they're there, they are tough."

Mazzer picked up momentum as the game went along, fanning the side in the second and the fifth. He finished with a 2-hitter, walked three and struck out 10 in six innings. The right-hander retired the last nine batters he faced.

Pittsfield broke open the one-run game with a three-run third. Mazzer and White drew walks and then pulled off a double steal with no outs. Rodovick fanned Wel-

7/10/98

See MERCY, B4

Lee rally wins spot in final

Pittsfield South is the foe today in 9-10 tourney

NORTH ADAMS — Lee scored six runs in the top of the sixth inning for a 9-6 come-from-behind win over Pittsfield West yesterday in the North Adams age 9-10 Little League Tournament at Kemp Park.

With the win, Lee advanced to today's 5:30 p.m. championship game against Pittsfield South. If Lee wins, a winner-take-all contest will be played tomorrow. A win by South would give the Pittsfield team a sweep of the county's two age 9-10 tournaments. Earlier, South won the Jimmy Fund tournament at Pittsfield North.

South has beaten Lee

Pittsfield South, which has not yet lost a tournament game this season, defeated Lee earlier in the North Adams tournament. Two pitchers combined to hurl a two-hitter as South beat Lee 11-1 on Aug. 5 in a game halted after five innings because of the 10-run mercy rule.

Lee, trailing 6-3 prior to the top of the sixth, scored five runs on errors and the sixth on a single by Andy Naventi for the win.

Lee scored three runs in the top of the first on a two-run double by Dave Lewis and a single by Justin Lovato.

Pittsfield West tied the game in the bottom of the second as Ryan Rapkowicz, Mark Ferry and Jerry Clon knocked in runs with singles.

West took its first lead in the third when T.J. Bowler scored on an error, and went ahead 6-3 in the fourth when Bowler and Patrick Nolan knocked in runs with singles.

Lovato had a single and a double for Lee while Rapkowicz had three singles and Bowler two for Pittsfield West.

Dave Lewis and Justin Daley teamed to hold Pittsfield West to nine hits. Lewis, the starter, struck out one and walked one. Daley finished up with three walks and a strikeout.

Brandon Mauer was the losing pitcher, walking nine and allowing six runs. Ferry started for Pittsfield West and struck out two in his three innings of work.

8/13/98

MERCY

From B1

teroth, but Jim Losaw lined a two-run single past the drawn-in infield for a 5-2 lead. He went to second on the throw home and dashed for third on a passed ball, scoring on an error on the play.

Pittsfield's final six runs came on three hits, two errors, five wild pitches and one passed ball. Rodovick took the loss for North Adams, going six innings and allowing six hits, six walks and fanning nine. Bryan Borowski finished up for North Adams.

Losaw was 2-for-4 with a triple, two RBI and three runs scored for Pittsfield. Ryan Elser was 2-for-4 with two RBI.

Besides Wooliver's first-inning single, J.D. Stone's double to left leading off the fourth was North Adams only other hit.

7/10/98

N. Adams 9-10 Little League opens today

NORTH ADAMS — Defending champion Pittsfield West will head an eight-team field in the annual North Adams age 9-10 Little League tournament that opens today at Kemp Park.

The double-elimination tournament opens today with Lee facing Pittsfield North at 5:30 p.m. Tomorrow, Pittsfield South plays Cheshire at 5:30. The final first-round games Saturday feature North Adams vs. Williamstown at 11 a.m. and Pittsfield West vs. Adams at 1 p.m.

The championship game is scheduled Aug. 13 at 5:30, and if the loser's bracket team wins that game, a winner-take-all final will be Aug. 14 at 5:30.

7/30/98

Pittsfield South reaches final, 15-4

Little League 9-10 Tourney

NORTH ADAMS — Dan Haddad belted a two-run double and a three-run double in the final two innings last night, leading Pittsfield South into the championship game of the North Adams age 9-10 Little League Tournament with a 15-4 win over Pittsfield West.

The loss dropped West into the loser's bracket final, which is scheduled today at 5:30 at Kemp Park against Lee. The winner gets a shot at the title tomorrow at 5:30 against Pittsfield South. If the loser's bracket team wins that game, a winner-take-all final will be played Friday at 5:30.

Last night, South led only 5-3 until Haddad's two-run double triggered a three-run fifth inning to make it 8-3. His bases-loaded double highlighted a five-run sixth that nailed down the win.

Earlier, Jeff Fields hit an RBI double in a two-run second inning, and David Glass hit a run-scoring double and Chris McGlaughlin and John Skutnik RBI singles in a three-run third.

For West, Dempsey Quinn had a run-scoring double in a three-run fourth inning. Glass, the first of three South pitchers who combined on a four-hitter, struck out five in three innings. South had seven hits off three West pitchers, as starter Mark Ferry took the loss.

8/12/98

Pittsfield West advances

9-10 Little League

NORTH ADAMS — Mark Ferry and Ryan Rapkowicz combined on a three-hit shutout as Pittsfield West beat North Adams 13-0 in the North Adams age 9-10 Little League Tournament yesterday at Kemp Park. The game was stopped after four innings because of the 10-run mercy rule.

The win moved Pittsfield West ahead in the winner's bracket, where it will face Pittsfield South on Tuesday. North Adams, however, fell into the loser's bracket, where it will play Williamstown tomorrow at 11 a.m.

Pittsfield West got on the board with a run in the first inning, five runs in the second, five more in the third and two in the fourth.

Ferry gave up all three hits in three innings. He struck out one and didn't walk a batter. Rapkowicz pitched one perfect inning.

Dempsey Quinn led the six-hit Pittsfield attack with a single and a double. Quinn had a two-run double in the third inning, while Patrick Nolan added an RBI single and Matt Davella had an RBI double in the inning.

Jason Engwer pitched three innings for North Adams, giving up 11 runs on six hits and seven walks, while striking out five. Mike Delisle pitched the final inning, giving up two runs on no hits and two walks. He had one strikeout.

8/7/98



Jared Leeds / Berkshire Eagle Staff

It's time to celebrate as Pittsfield South pitcher Jeff Fields (6) is greeted by teammates, from left, Ben Joslyn, Shane Snyder and Chad Brown after their team's 7-3 win over Lee in last night's championship game of the North Adams age 9-10 Little League tournament.

8/14/98

The South stars rise again

Pittsfield 9-10 Little Leaguers win at N. Adams for 14-0 season

By Tom Ryan
Eagle Correspondent

NORTH ADAMS — The Pittsfield South age 9-10 Little League team already had enjoyed a successful summer on the ballfield, winning two tournaments and rolling to a 13-0 record. Last night, they put another game in the win column and in the process won another tournament.

Tim Burns, David Glass and Jeff Fields combined on a one-hitter and struck out six last night to lead the South All-Stars to a 7-3 win over Lee in the North Adams age 9-10 tournament championship game at Kemp Park.

"Winning the Berkshire County Jimmy Fund Tournament was big, but winning this tournament is pretty good, too," said South manager Matt Stracuzzi of his little Red machine, which finished the season 14-0 and also won the Great Barrington Tournament last weekend. "Sometimes with 9-and 10-year-olds you don't know what to expect. These kids just kept getting themselves up for games."

SOUTH, continued on C3



Jared Leeds / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Slamming on the brakes, Lee runner Justin Lovato, right, retreats as he is pursued by Pittsfield South second baseman Chad Brown in first-inning rundown. Lovato's delay enabled a Lee run to score.

South from C1

Lee, which scored six runs in the sixth inning against Pittsfield West on Wednesday to advance to the final, looked like it might be the one to bring South's domination to an end when they scored twice in the first inning.

Justin Mooney opened the game with Lee's only hit, a solid single to center field and Tyler Perry followed with a walk. Mooney went to third when Justin Daley bounced into a fielder's choice that retired Perry at second, and Daley took second when the belated throw to first got away. Mooney then scored on a wild pitch. With two outs, Justin Lovato drew a walk. Lovato then got caught in a rundown which allowed Daley to score before he was tagged out.

South answered with a run in the bottom of the first. Lee starter Dave Lewis hit Tim Burns to open the inning, and Chad Brown followed with a base hit that sent Burns to third. Glass then lifted a fly ball to right that scored Burns.

"We've been behind before, so that wasn't much cause for concern," said Stracuzzi, whose team had beaten Lee 11-1 earlier in the tournament. "We know we can score runs, and our pitching and defense don't give up too many."

South took the lead with two more runs in the second. Pat Larkin opened the inning by reaching on a bunt single, went to second on a passed ball and third on a wild pitch. With one out, Burns walked and stole second. Brown, after fouling off two bunt attempts, then lined a single up the middle to score both runners.

Pittsfield added to its lead with two runs in both the third and fourth. In the third, Kevin Dellea had an RBI fielder's choice and Burns an RBI double. South scored one run in the fourth on a wild pitch and the other on a fielder's choice by Shane Snyder.

Lee threatened again in the sixth, but could score just one run. South reliever Glass hit Perry to open the inning. Daley bounced into a fielder's choice that retired Perry for the first out. Dave Lewis then reached on an error, and Lovato walked to load the bases. Jason Fields came on in relief and after throwing a wild pitch that allowed Daley to score, struck out the next two hitters to end the game.

"We didn't plan on using Jason unless David had trouble," said Stracuzzi. "Jason doesn't throw very hard, but he does throw strikes. That's all we wanted."

"We played Pittsfield a lot this year, and we knew we could give them a game," said Lee manager Mark Perry, whose squad went 0-5 against South. "We were happy just to get that chance to play them again, because we felt we had something to prove."

Brown and Glass each finished with two hits for South. Burns pitched the first three innings for Pittsfield and Glass went 2⅓ innings and struck out three. Lewis, Matt Keegan and Perry all pitched for Lee.

8/14/98

Pittsfield South rolls to win

8/16/98

9-10 Little League

NORTH ADAMS — David Glass and Chad Brown combined on a two-hitter as Pittsfield South advanced in the North Adams age 9-10 Little League tournament with a 11-1 win over Lee at Kemp Park.

The game, stopped after five innings by the 10-run mercy rule, knocks Lee into the loser's bracket, where it will play Pittsfield North tomorrow. Pittsfield South, meanwhile, awaits the winner of tonight's game between North Adams and Pittsfield West at 5:30.

Glass got the win, going three innings. He gave up a run on two hits and two walks, while striking out five. Brown pitched two scoreless innings, giving up no hits and no walks, while striking out two.

Starter Matt Keenan took the loss for Lee. Keenan went 2⅓ innings, giving up six runs on two hits and three walks, while striking out two. Andy Naventi gave up three runs on two hits and a walk and didn't record an out, while Justin Daley pitched the final 2⅔ innings. He gave up two runs on two hits and two walks, with two strikeouts.

Brown led the six-hit Pittsfield South attack with a single and a double. Jeff Fields hit a two-run double that keyed Pittsfield South's five-run third inning. That turned a 4-0 game into a 9-0 game.

Kasey Hickey had an RBI single in the third for Lee, and Tyler Perry had Lee's other hit.

North eliminates Cheshire

Little League age 9-10 Tourney

NORTH ADAMS — Pittsfield North took advantage of six walks and an error to score five times in the first inning and rolled to a 12-2 win over Cheshire last night in a loser's-bracket game in the North Adams age 9-10 Little League Tournament at Kemp Park.

The loss eliminated Cheshire from the tournament.

North added two more runs in the fifth on RBI singles by Justin Rivelli and Brett Eksusian, and closed out the scoring with seven more runs in the sixth. Jesse Giardina and Matt Lyon had RBI singles in the inning.

Cheshire scored one run in the fifth on a base hit by Kevin Lamont, and one more in the sixth on a fielder's-choice ground out by Nolan Brassard.

Clayton Pierce and Dan Whales combined on a two-hitter for North. Pierce pitched the first three innings, giving up one hit and striking out three. Whalen pitched the last three innings and struck out five.

Pierce and Kevin Robinson each had two hits for North. Brassard had the other Cheshire hit.

8/15/98

Pittsfield South wins age 9-10 opener, 11-3

Lee ousted in district debut, 10-2

Youth Baseball

Pittsfield South brought its offense to the North Adams age 9-10 Little League tournament, pounding out 14 hits on the way to an 11-3 victory over Cheshire yesterday at Kemp Park.

Also yesterday, Westfield North defeated Lee 10-2 in the the age 11-12 District Little League Tournament.

South 11, Cheshire 3

NORTH ADAMS — Pittsfield South took an 11-0 lead and three pitchers held Cheshire to five hits to pick up the win.

Pittsfield South scored four runs in the top of the second inning. Ben Joslyn knocked in a run with a single and scored on an error, Tim Burns knocked in a run and another run scored on an error for a 4-0 lead.

Pittsfield South put the game away in the third, scoring seven times.

Shane Snyder and John Skutnik each doubled in two runs, Joslyn knocked in two with a single and another run scored on a fielder's choice for an 11-0 lead.

Cheshire scored two runs in the bottom of the third as Matt Gwozdz and Adam Wright scored on errors, and scored its final run in the fourth when Tom Kolodziej doubled and scored on a Ross Campoli single.

Tim Burns started for Pittsfield South and threw an inning. Adam Simeone was the winning pitcher, with three innings in relief of Burns. He allowed three unearned runs before giving way to Dave Glass, who struck out six in his two innings.

Joslyn had four singles for Pittsfield South and Skutnik had two singles and a double. Dan Haddad had two singles.

Westfield North 10, Lee 2

WESTFIELD — Berkshire County champion Lee was eliminated from the district tournament with yesterday's loss.

Aaron Smith was the winning pitcher, tossing a two-hitter, and also hit a solo home run to lead Westfield, which will play Monday in Worcester.

Chris Wade and Joe Curtin had singles for Lee's two hits.

"It was awesome," Lee coach Bob Daley said of his team's season. "We went undefeated in the county and we weren't expected to do anything. Some of the top ballplayers in the league didn't even play. Every single kid went out and gave 100 percent, played to the best of their ability and had a great time. Westfield had a good team and hit the ball very well."

8/1/98

Burbank Park costs escalate

Improvement plan advances but user fees seem likely

A Burbank Park renewal effort will cost nearly 25 percent more than originally estimated, parks commissioners learned on Tuesday.

Despite the newly estimated $1.2 million price tag for the extensive park refurbishment, commissioners remain solidly behind the project.

Craig Lang of Okerstrom Lang, the company that designed the project, told the commission on Tuesday that several factors contributed to the "updated" estimate, which was figured at about $890,000 in May.

Lang said that "detailing" of the project proved more extensive than originally thought. A delay in gaining funding for the project also contributed, Lang said, pushing the project from the 1997 construction season into the 1998 season.

An increase in the project's contingency fund, which was originally set at 8 percent of the total project, also contributed, Lang said. The new contingency will be 10 percent.

Lang noted that just over $1 million has been earmarked for the project — a combination of state grants and city funds. The bidding process should begin by early March and construction could begin in April.

The plan calls for extensive refurbishment of the park, which embraces Onota Lake. The work calls for improvements to two beaches, parking facilities, boat ramps, picnic sites, hiking trails and access roads. The plan also calls for the building of new restrooms and a new pavilion.

Community services director Robert Mellace said that additional grant funding is "possible" for specific projects, such as the building of a walkway from an upper parking lot, through state "public access" monies.

After hearing Lang's report, the commission unanimously approved the new estimate. Chairman Robert Smith said that officials would use creative means, such as using city employees to complete some work or soliciting "in-kind" donations of materials.

See BURBANK page 7



1/22/98

Extensive improvements to Burbank Park could begin as early as April but the plan carries a high price tag. According to new estimates, the park renewal, which will include improvements to beaches, parking lots and facilities, will cost $1.2 million.

The Pittsfield Gazette April 9, 1998

Common touted for skateboarders

By Anthony Fyden

Park commissioners on Monday endorsed building a skateboard park near the northeast corner of the Pittsfield Common on First Street.

The board unanimously voted to recommend the Common despite strong objections from county treasurer Peter Arlos.

The commission, while favoring the Common, also forwarded two other possibilities for Mayor Gerald Doyle to consider: a city-owned plot of land behind Pittsfield High School and a shared location with the tennis courts at PHS.

Arlos said that the Common would not appeal to skateboarders — who favor more visible areas — and could present security worries.

"You're going to have a lot of problems," Arlos said. "It won't be used. The right thing is Appleton Avenue."

But board members disagreed, noting that several teenage skateboarders had expressed enthusiasm about the Common site during a March 31 meeting hosted by park commission chairman Robert Smith.

"There were thrilled by the location," said park commissioner Ben Kaplan. "They liked the idea."

The teens who advised the delegation were "intelligent, well-spoken and they knew what they wanted," Kaplan added.

The former ward 4 city councilor said that an architect also attended the March 31 meeting, offering an estimate in the "$15,000 range" to grade the site, pave the area and install prefabricated concrete ramps.

But Arlos continued to object, noting that a representative of a Scituate company had favored the Appleton Avenue site. The teenagers who skateboard would quickly grow bored with the Common because of its low visibility to the public, he added. "It's a showoff sport," Arlos said.

The former at-large city councilor also suggested that city officials had been intimidated by a few home owners who objected to the Appleton Avenue lot.

"The problem we're having with that site is symbolic of Pittsfield," Arlos said.

Board members appeared to least favor the concept of building near the PHS tennis courts. Members worried that the site wouldn't provide enough space and that the skateboarders would clash with tennis players.

But Kaplan also said that the Appleton Avenue lot presented similar problems, since it is adjacent to the high school's softball field: "A lot of these sports can't coexist."

Ward 5 city councilor Rick Scapin, who has advocated for a skateboard park, favored the Common site. "I think it's a great idea," he said. "The Common's a great spot."

Smith, who wasn't at Monday's meeting, endorsed the Common location in a letter to Doyle.

"Having a skate park there would cut down on vandalism and increase visibility to that area of the park without causing problems for the neighbors," Smith wrote. "These kids have been promised a skate park for over the past two years. It's time to move forward with this project."

The Pittsfield Gazette January 22, 1998

Burbank Park improvement plans progress, but at a price

continued from page 1

Smith told the board that other city officials, including Mayor Gerald Doyle, Jr., also support the plan.

"I know the mayor's committed to this project," Smith said. "He'll look to any way to make this project work."

The commission appears poised to institute a fee plan for park attendance, with several board members saying that charging admission to the park could help offset renovation costs and help pay for ongoing maintenance.

Board member Ben Kaplan listed the fee schedule for Northampton's popular Look Park, saying the admission charge was not only a revenue source but a deterrent to drug activity.

Northampton example

"This cut out all the drugs that were going on [at Look Park]," he said. "This would help a great deal."

Kaplan suggested that the commission at some point invite a representative of Look Park to discuss the issue with the board. The park renovation would be futile unless the board comes up with a long-term maintenance plan, he added.

Mellace said that the state, as part of the funding process, "strongly suggests" a fee system, while not mandating one.

"I think it's something the commission's going to have to wrestle with for months or years to come," Mellace said.

"You don't make an investment like this in a park" and not develop a maintenance plan, he added.

Lang said that the designers had instituted some minor changes in the plan. The upper beach area, for example, has been narrowed from the original plan by about ten feet. The new beach will be more clearly defined, he said, with an elevated grass portion which will allow parents a good view of the water front where kids will be playing.

Parking shortage

Designers also decided that the number of available parking spaces for boat trailers, now at 18, is inadequate. "We're quickly realizing that this south parking lot is going to be very popular," he said.

Several additional trailer parking spots could be made available in an upper lot, necessitating construction of a "walkway" for patrons.

Lang said that, once construction is underway, certain sections of the park may need to be closed. The boat ramp, for example, may not be available for several weeks during the project.

Commissioner Clifford Nilan suggested holding a public meeting and inviting boaters and other park users to discuss the project and gather input on how to minimize inconvenience.

But city councilor Rick Scapin said he didn't understand why whole sections of the park would be closed. Road contractors regularly undertake large projects while managing to keep traffic flowing, he said.

Kitchen plans

After some debate, commissioners opted for a less-equipped kitchen facility in the planned pavilion, which would be available for lease. The original design called for a "level three" kitchen, in which food could be prepped and cooked. The proposal would have necessitated installation of a hood and ventilation system, as well as a fire-supression and alarm system, which commissioners felt was excessive.

Smith said that the pavilion, which will seat about 40 people, will be used primarily for small family gatherings. The fully-equipped kitchen could be damaged by vandals or by patrons unfamiliar with the equipment.

"My only question is, do we really need it?" Smith asked.

The commission opted instead for a "level two" kitchen, which would feature items such as a refrigerator and sinks, but not ovens.

The Pittsfield Gazette April 9, 1998

Parks board endorses 'wish list'

The parks commission's 1998-99 wish list includes lengthening the beach season, hiring two additional full-time maintenance workers and purchasing more equipment.

The board on Monday endorsed a list of budget recommendations after hearing an outline from community services director Robert Mellace.

Although Mellace has already presented a "level funded" budget to mayor Gerald Doyle, Jr., he said the items could be forwarded at some point as supplemental requests.

Topping the list were the additional maintenance workers, who Mellace estimated would cost $37,500 annually: "With the construction of a new girls' softball complex, street hockey rink, a renovated Burbank park and ... other proposed park improvements, additional maintenance men would help this department better maintain these facilities and protect the city's capital investment."

More equipment is needed since "most of our vehicles are hand-me-downs," the report stated. Mellace estimated new equipment costs at $175,000.

The report states that requests for new programs and park events has placed pressure on the department's utility budget. For example, lights have been added to Pitt Park and lights are expected to be repaired at Dorothy Amos Park.

A warming hut and security lighting have also been installed at Clapp Park and are included as part of a Burbank Park refurbishment plan. In response to these changes, Mellace suggests that the utility budget, now at $35,000, be increased by $5,000.

Parks commissioners also endorsed a Mellace suggestion to extend the playground and beach seasons at Onota Lake. Currently the lifeguard season lasts only from July 1 through August 9, with additional weekend dates from Memorial Day through July 1 and from August 15 through Labor Day.

The board unanimously voted to extend the full-time lifeguard season by two weeks, which Mellace estimates would cost about $4,500. Adding lifeguards at Pontoosuc Lake, which the board supported, would cost $1,150 per week.

As the panel considered the wish list items, board member Ben Kaplan reiterated his belief that the parks department should develop revenue sources in order to better support programs and maintenance.

Officials, Kaplan said, should move quickly to develop income sources, particularly at Burbank Park, which is scheduled to undergo a major refurbishment this year. Possible sources could include an admission charge to Onota Lake or paddle boat rental, he said.

Making Park Square accessible

5/20/98

The refurbishing of Park Square, symbolized by turning on the long dormat water fountain, is certainly welcome to all those seeking to revive the ambience of downtown Pittsfield. Yet plans to resurface sidewalks, install period lighting and restore the Civil War memorial, while appealing, do not go far enough. Insulated by a merry-go-round traffic pattern, Park Square remains a lovely but inaccessible pedestrian oasis that one risks life and limb to get to. On hold is a sensible proposal to extend the park to Bank Row and reconfigure traffic, an initiative endorsed in principle if not in reality by Mayor Gerald S. Doyle Jr. Until the park is enlarged — and hopefully it won't occur in a geologic timeframe — the best way to see Park Square will be from the window of a car or the cab of a truck.

City issues warning to users of parks

PITTSFIELD — The Parks Commission, citing numerous complaints from residents, is urging users of the city's parks to curb their dogs and to pick up after their dogs.

Robert Mellace, director of community services, expressed the hope that park users will voluntarily comply with the city ordinance requiring that they either pick up after their dogs or walk their dogs in unmaintained areas of the parks.

The city ordinance allows the dog officer and park security personnel to fine any individual who allows his or her dog to defecate on maintained areas of park property, including but not limited to beaches, playgrounds, picnic areas, basketball courts, and playing fields of any kind.

Fines can be up to $300 per offense.

The commission also reminded dog owners that dogs are to be restrained at all times while on park property and not allowed to run loose.

5/15/98

Tuesday, December 1, 1998

Briefs

Judge: Creche is unconstitutional

BOSTON (AP) — For the first time in 60 years, there will be no nativity scene in front of the Somerset Town Hall this Christmas season.

U.S. District Judge Richard G. Stearns ruled Monday that the nativity scene put up yearly by Somerset firefighters is an unconstitutional violation of the separation of church and state.

His ruling came in a suit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union at the request of an "embarrassed" Gil Lawrence Amancio, who has lived in Somerset for 15 years and is New England regional director for American Atheists Inc.

The suit was filed after Christmas last year, and Somerset Town Administrator John McAuliffe said the display was not put up this year pending a ruling in the case.

...zette July 2, 1998

...LY PARADE LINEUP



Pittsfield's mobile stage will be used as the official reviewing stand for the Fourth of July Parade. The stage's trailer recently got a new look, thanks to in-kind donations from Petricca Industries and Callahan Signs.

The Pittsfield Gazette February 26, 1998

FEBRUARY 24 MEETING



City councilors voiced support for Springside Park during Tuesday's meeting. Rick Scapin said the park should be restored to its former glory. The council's message of support will be forwarded to parks commission.

Reopening of Amos Park contemplated

With approval from the parks commission, the basketball courts of Dorothy Amos Park could be available by springtime.

Ward 6 city councilor Jim Massery on Tuesday called for a section of the PCB contaminated park to be opened, allowing basketball play. He noted that the contamination is concentrated in soil at the park's north end —away from the blacktopped courts.

General Electric has agreed to pay for relocating the fence and reopening the park, which has been completely fenced off since summer.

Massery called on the council to act quickly. "Here's an opportunity for our kids to get back out on the courts," he said. "GE is ready to pay for this now — right now."

But other councilors pointed out that the matter is largely out of the council's hands, since the parks commission oversees all park property.

Ward 5 councilor Rick Scapin asked that the matter be referred to the parks commission, despite Massery's objections that local kids have been "inconvenienced" long enough.

Massery's choice of the words ruffled the feathers of ward 7 councilor Joe Guzzo, who shot back that city officials were originally acting to protect residents' health in shutting down the park.

"I don't think anyone's been inconvenienced," Guzzo said. "It kind of upsets me a tad when someone says kids have been 'inconvenienced'."

The council agreed to forward the matter to the parks commission, which could act on the petition at its Monday meeting. 2/26/98

Summer jobs still available at parks dept.

PITTSFIELD — The Department of Community Services/ Parks and Recreation has announced that there are openings still available for summer employment at the City's parks.

Employment is available for lifeguards, recreation program leaders and park security personnel.

Applications are available at either the personnel department at City Hall or the Department of Community Services office, 874 North St. The extended deadline for all applications is June 5.

Information: 499-9343. 5/15/98.

Park Square improvements topic of Monday meeting

PITTSFIELD — The Board of Park Commissioners will conduct a public meeting on Monday,at 7, at the Springside House, 874 North St., regarding proposed improvements to Park Square.

The City was recently awarded a $140,000 park restoration grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission, which must be matched by local funds.

The purpose of the meeting is to gather public input regarding the proposed improvements. Berkshire Design Group Inc. of Northampton, the city's design consultant, will be present to provide a preliminary plan and answer questions.

The proposed improvements will be designed to rehabilitate and preserve the historical aspects and qualities of the park and complement the recently restored fountain. 5/14/98

Work ahead at Burbank Park

To the Editor of THE EAGLE:—

This summer the city will be renovating Burbank Park. Last year I suggested it charge a fee for the use of the park, one fee for city residents, another for out-of-towners and stickers for seniors. We need to have a gate and supervisors of this gate to collect the fees. Close the park at 8 p.m. on both ends. Ben Kaplan's idea of extra officers is a great idea.

In the past, there were two park officers who were not near the boat area too often. We also had a plain clothes man who was not there last year but when he was there he helped rid the park of undesirables. A whole group of seniors have their watchful eyes on their lake.

The park was very beautiful. Today we have four-wheelers, some with no mufflers. There is a lot of cleaning up to do. Drinking needs to be banned and no eating allowed on the beach. Heavy fines need to be in place. Mayor Doyle has his work cut out for him.

There was once a sandy beach with stairs for youngsters. I understand that is part of this project. We are blessed in this community to have such panoramic views, and nice parks. However we do have these destructive people who wrecked the dock and threw trash barrels in the lake. I don't know how they were brought up. Obviously not well. They burned down trees and a bath house. I guess they think they're smart — they're delinquents. If caught, they should clean up their mess. We need strict discipline in order to keep this park clean. If everyone chipped in to do this it would be easy and not costly. However, I don't think some people care.

MONA SPERLONGA
Pittsfield, Jan. 5, 1998 1/10/98

Parks department will survey needs of elders

1/15/98

The parks commission plans to explore recreational needs of older residents.

"We have programs for the children, for the teenagers, for adults in the softball leagues ... but there's very few recreational programs for older people," said city councilor James Boyle.

On Monday, Boyle suggested that the commission investigate senior programming.

"There are things we can look into, like a softball league for those 55 and older, tying into the bocce leagues... maybe even badminton," said Boyle.

Parks commissioner Cliff Nilan said the idea is worth exploring, perhaps by holding a public meeting to see if need exists.

"I think we should be doing this," said Nilan. "Let's ask the recreation director to look into what other communities are doing for seniors."

Warming house monies endorsed

Councilors on Tuesday approved a $2,000 appropriation to rehabilitate the warming house at Clapp Park.

The monies will be used to replace interior ceiling and wallboards and provide electrical service.

Ward 5 city councilor Rick Scapin advocated for the project previously as a member of the parks commission. He has expressed hope that community groups such as booster clubs will use the warming house to sell refreshments to skaters.

Scapin said that, weather-permitting, the skating area should be ready at the park this weekend. 1/15/98

Grant sought for Park Square

Following the lead of the parks commission, the council on Tuesday approved a $150,000 state historical grant application for Park Square.

The park commission endorsed the application on Monday.

Community services director Bob Mellace has developed the application, which park commission chairman Bob Smith said would be used for fountain restoration, period lighting and other enhancements.

Smith and Mayor Gerald Doyle Jr. met recently with secretary of state William Galvin to discuss the project. 1/15/98

Pittsfield Beautiful fund drive open through March

PITTSFIELD — Pittsfield Beautiful Inc. has opened its 10th annual fund drive to the general public for support of its beautification projects. The drive will run through March.

Projects in the $24,000 budget for 1998 include continuation of the flower planting in the business district; the donation of seedlings to fourth-graders at Highland School and first-graders in all other schools, and expansion of the day lily/daffodil plantings.

A joint venture with the Parks Department and the Springside Greenhouse Group to revitalize the tulip beds at Springside Park will take place in the fall.

Pittsfield Beautiful is nonprofit and all contributions are tax-deductible. 3/1/98

JOB LISTINGS

The City of Pittsfield is now accepting applications for Seasonal Employment positions in the Department of Parks, Department of Public Works and the Department of Public Utilities. Applications are available at the personnel office, City Hall Room 107, 70 Allen St. Deadline for applications is March 13, 1998. EOE/ADA/AA Employer. 3/5/98

Seasonal employment offered in Pittsfield

PITTSFIELD — The City of Pittsfield is accepting applications for seasonal employment positions in the departments of parks, public works and public utilities.

Applications are available at the personnel office, City Hall room 107, 70 Allen St.

Deadline for applications is March 13. 2/19/98

Residents appointed to city boards

The council approved the appointment of Sue Colker of East New Lenox Road to serve on the parks commission.

Mayor Gerald Doyle Jr., appointed Colker to fill the parks commission vacancy created when Rick Scapin left to serve on the city council.

Reappointed to two year terms on the council on aging were Keith Olsen of Nottingham Drive; Guy Pellegrinelli of Fenn Street; Vincent Hebert of Rose Terrace; Jeffrey Thompson of Tor Court; Albert Ingegni, III of Roberta Road and Eleanor Persip of Central Berkshire Boulevard. 2/12/98

Good spot for skateboarding

The recommendation of the Board of Park Commissioners to put a skateboarding area in the north end of the Pittsfield Common is a good one and should be acted upon as soon as possible. Allowing the skateboarders to use a closed-off portion of North Street did not work out well for the skateboarders, merchants or pedestrians, but the Common is already a recreational area and is under the board's jurisdiction. Skateboarding is here to stay — as are young people — and Pittsfield should do its best to accommodate its youth in a way that doesn't inconvenience others in the city. 4/13/98

Board backs Common skateboard park

By Greg Sukiennik
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — The Board of Park Commissioners has gone on record supporting a skateboarding park at the Pittsfield Common, near the playground area at the north end of the downtown park.

For more than a year, the commissioners, city leaders, the city Youth Commission and the city's growing legion of young skateboarders have been seeking a place where the sport can be safely enjoyed. Late last year, the City Council, led by former Councilor at large Peter G. Arlos, explored a number of options, including the Pittsfield High tennis courts and an unused parcel of land at the rear of the PHS practice fields.

The commission, having looked at a number of sites, decided on the Common because it is central, well-lit and already under the board's jurisdiction.

The board based its decision on the availability of the property and on the results of visits to the proposed sites, member Clifford J. Nilan said. "The boarders seemed to feel the Common is an excellent site, and it's something we have jurisdiction over," he said. "We were in agreement it could be done fairly quickly because the property is available."

Tentative plans call for the skateboarding surface to be asphalt, and the commision expects it can be built for between $5,000 and $10,000.

"We would hope that we can do this by summer," Nilan said. He added the credit for bringing the long-sought park closer to reality should go to Arlos, former Park Commissioner and current Ward 5 city Councilor Richard A. Scapin, and board chairman Robert A. Smith. "All along they have been advocating for a site, and for doing something for the skateboarders," he said.

The board will next present its recommendation to Mayor Gerald S. Doyle Jr., and is already seeking donations of labor and materials from residents to help defray the cost.

During the past two summers, city youth have been allowed to skate on closed-off portions of North Street. But they are not welcome everywhere, and have been chased out of a number of city locales, most notably the McKay Street parking garage.

SKATEBOARD, continued on B6

4/11/98

▪ Skateboard from B1

The commission also approved a "wish list" budget to be forwarded to Doyle for possible budget additions and capital improvements. The list was put together as a way to advocate for specific needs, as Doyle has requested that all city departments submit level-funded budgets for fiscal year 1999.

The wish list includes additional maintenance staff, new maintenance equipment and vehicles, an increase in the parks utility budget, an extension of the summer parks season, $2,000 for improvements to the greenhouse at Springside Park, and $5,000 for the Vincent Hebert Arboretum at Springside Park.

The commission, at Arlos' request, also went on record supporting a management plan for Silver Lake. The City Council will take up that issue on Tuesday.

In other business, the commission approved the usage of parks by the following groups:

- Comunidad de Latinos Unidos, for a spring festival at the Common on Saturday, June 20, from noon to 5.
- The West Side Neighborhood Resource Center, for Stand for Children Day at Pitt Park, Monday, June 1, from 6 to 8 p.m.
- The West Side Neighborhood Resource Center, for National Night Out at Pitt Park, Tuesday, Aug. 4, from 6 to 9 p.m.

4/11/98

In the Berkshires

Bids out for Park Square fountain

PITTSFIELD — The city has once again advertised for bids for repair of the Park Square fountain, as Mayor Gerald S. Doyle Jr. has carried through on former Mayor Edward M. Reilly's commitment to repair the landmark. Reilly had hoped to fix the fountain before his departure, but the job proved to be more expensive than the city had expected.

The fountain, which sits in the middle of the park where the Old Elm once stood, has been inoperational for some time. The Reilly administration had advertised the project for $15,000, but only one contractor submitted a bid, and that was for $33,000.

With that in mind, the city purchasing office has estimated the cost of the repair at $35,000. Bids are due on Tuesday, March 24, at 2 p.m.

Another project the city had intended to finish last year was the reconstruction of Linden Street. But time ran out on the city, and rather than begin the project in late fall, the Department of Public Works opted to bid it for early summer this year. The Linden Street bids are due Thursday, March 26, at 2. 2/26/98

Parks Commission sets skateboard park talks

PITTSFIELD — The Board of Park Commissioners will hold a public meeting on the proposed skateboard park on Monday at 7 p.m. at Springside House.

The meeting is open to the public, and input from the meeting will be considered in the final design and location of the skateboard park. 5/1/98

**********ECRLOT**C057
PARKS DEPARTMENT
CITY OF PITTSFIELD
874 NORTH ST
PITTSFIELD MA 01201-1504



Dream Won't Fade
PAGE 3

The Pittsfield Gazette
ISSUE 351 APRIL 2, 1998
BULK RATE U.S. POSTAGE PAID PERMIT NO. 41 PITTSFIELD MA 01201

PCB park reopens

Limited access now allowed at West Street site

By Anthony Fyden

An open gate and sunsplashed spring weather provided the only announcement.

But that's all it took.

The Dorothy Amos Park on West Street partially reopened this past week. Almost immediately, thumping basketballs and shouts of young people at play replaced the ominous silence which had enveloped the park for months.



Part of Dorothy Amos park — including the swingset area — remains fenced off.

In a development that stunned the community, the park was closed in mid-August when environmental officials learned that the site was contaminated with PCBs and other dangerous chemicals.

With a quickness that seemed to underscore the seriousness of the situation, workers erected a chain-link fence around the entire park, securing it with padlocks. Once one of the most popular playgrounds in the city, the park loomed as a striking reminder of the city's PCB contamination problem.

Community services director Robert Mellace said that workers moved the fence last week, then parks employees on Friday installed the basketball rims. "I guess it was officially open then," Mellace said.

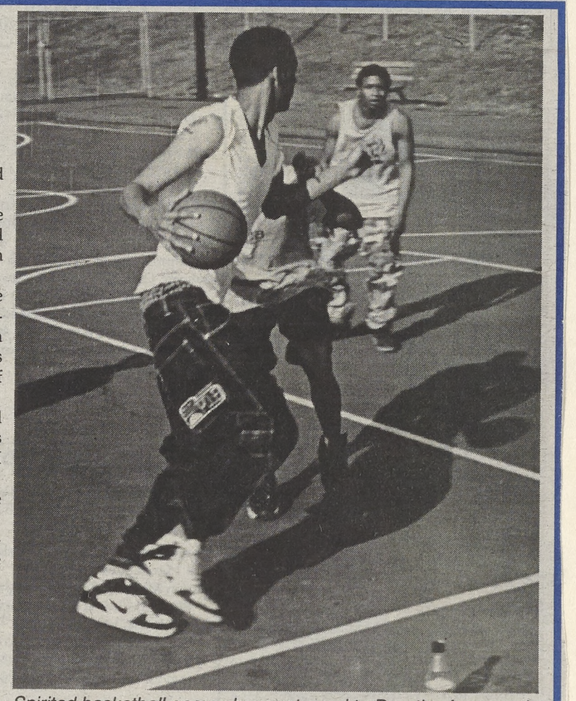
So how is it that Dorothy Amos again welcomes the community?

City officials learned this winter that the PCB contamination, although serious, is concentrated on the park's north side, away from the basketball courts.

City councilor James Massery pushed to have the fence relocated beyond the courts. Environmental officials approved the idea, setting the stage for the partial reopening.

"I think it's important that we try to look for ways to keep our community going in spite of our problems,"

See PARK page 12



Spirited basketball games have returned to Dorothy Amos park. The West Street site is being used for the first time since August.

Consulting firm looking into reviving Silver Lake

By D.R. Bahlman
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — Representatives of a consulting firm retained to put together a plan for the revitalization of Silver Lake were told on Tuesday that some residents view the 26-acre lake as a "toxic waste dump."

Nonetheless, an informal survey conducted by the consultants during a public meeting at the Silvio O. Conte Courthouse sponsored by the four-member Silver Lake Management Committee revealed that most of the approximately 15 people who filled out the survey form believe that the lake can become a valuable recreational resource.

"You've got to have a detailed plan if you're going to compete for the shrinking dollars out there," Paul D. Cacciamani, president of Synergist Technology Group Inc. of Carbondale, Pa., told the gathering.

Synergist, which is being paid with $20,000 in city funding, was recently selected by city officials as the consultant on the Silver Lake project.

Cacciamani said that his company's task over the next few months will be to solicit citizens' ideas for the lake, then summarize them in a detailed plan which would be submitted to state and federal agencies for funding. General Electric also is reported to have offered $5 million to clean up the area.

Another meeting of the management committee, which is comprised of Berkshire County Treasurer Peter G. Arlos, City Council President Thomas E. Hickey Jr., John Pannozzo, Alicia Henry and Henry Hebert, will be scheduled for October.

8/13/98

BUDGET QUESTIONS

Is parks spending up?

A new position is being added to the parks department budget.

The mayor and city council agreed earlier this year to create a Springside Park manager position, for which $25,000 is allocated.

The parks budget is also slightly increased to allow additional "seasonal labor," specifically to extend the park leader and Onota Lake lifeguard season by three weeks.

5/21/98

West Street playground reopens for limited use

continued from page 1

Massery said. "As anyone can see, it's a popular place."

This week's summer-like weather clearly demonstrated the park's appeal. The courts at Dorothy Amos hosted near-continuous basketball games. Families and individuals occupied park benches. On Tuesday evening, cars lined West Street and nearly 50 people strolled the diminished confines of the park.

"This is so nice," one woman said while sitting on a park bench near the flowing Housatonic River. "I'm just glad they opened it."

Despite the festive atmosphere, the now-divided park offered a stark contrast. The chain link fence has been moved, but it still reminds visitors of environmental contamination.

Some park visitors even voiced gallows humor. A young man, when asked if the PCB threat worried him, replied "We all gotta die some time."

Others didn't seem to be aware, or very concerned, why the park had been closed at all.

Kids' area closed

While the basketball courts are active, the swing sets and other playground activities beyond the fence stand silent.

Parks commissioners, in fact, initially rejected opening half the park, with some believing the threat of PCBs so near would be oppressive.

"At first I didn't think it was a great move at all," said ward 5 city councilor Rick Scapin, a former member of the parks commission.

Scapin said that, initially, he worried about the possible health impact. Even when he learned that the contamination was contained, the idea of children playing a few feet away from hazardous waste troubled him.

"That really bothered me," he said. "I started asking questions and when they did more testing they told us that [the contamination] seems to be contained to the back [of the park]."

While hesitant, Scapin eventually supported the idea, and is now glad that he did. "Overall, I think it was a very good move," he said. "Look at the place, it's jammed."

While residents are now enjoying the park, it may be a fleeting celebration.

Environmental Protection Agency officials have indicated that the entire park will eventually be closed again when the agency and General Electric agree to a cleanup strategy.

Massery believes the site should remain open. The park is too important to shut down again.

"I'm against [closing the park]," he said. "I'm hoping that they'll find a way to keep it open."

Mellace said that, while the park is open, a timer for outdoor lighting is not working properly.

If organized leagues wish to use the park at night, they may contact the parks department to make arrangements for turning the lights on and off, he said.

4/2/98

City will fill new and vacant jobs

Councilors on Tuesday endorsed the creation of a new parks department job and the filling of three vacant municipal positions.

The new job — funds for which have not yet been appropriated — would be a property manager for Springside Park. Salary for this full-time position would be $25,000.

The position description developed by community services director Bob Mellace specifies coordination with the parks commission and groups that use the park. Qualifications include maintenance experience, ability to work with the public and both vehicle & manual labor skills. The personnel review board — which reviews all city job vacancies — previously endorsed the new position, in part because it had been requested in a petition submitted by councilors Rick Scapin, Paul Dowd and Bill Barry.

The first vacant position to be filled by Mayor Gerald Doyle Jr. is that of local building inspector. Doyle has appointed Wayne Rick Reid to fill the vacancy created by the recent retirement of longtime inspector Robert Pomeroy.

Also being filled, at the request of police chief Anthony Riello, is a parking control officer's position, to replace an employee who was fired.

Riello also received endorsement to fill a long-vacant part-time animal control officer position. This job is being upgraded from 16 to 30 hours per week.

The new position and endorsements to fill the vacancies were all approved by 8-0 votes.

4/30/98



Joel Librizzi / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Perfect form

The Park Square water fountain runs perfectly on a recent day in Pittsfield.

5/19/98

Two downtown landmarks awarded state grants



Eagle archives

The First Baptist Church at the corner of South and Church streets as it appeared in 1939. The congregation was founded in the 1850s.

By Greg Sukiennik
Berkshire Eagle Staff

Projects in five Berkshire towns also won grants for preservation. 3/14/98

PITTSFIELD — The state Historical Commission has awarded preservation grants for two downtown landmarks — First Baptist Church and Park Square. The grants were part of a large package of awards to a variety of sites in Berkshire County.

A grant of $93,000 will fund the repair of the 68-year-old church building and $140,000 will pay for the repair of the fountain and walkways and other improvements to the famed park.

The grants were announced Thursday by the secretary of the commonwealth, William Francis Galvin, and by members of the county delegation to the Statehouse.

Overall, the Massachusetts Preservation Fund is providing $7.6 million in 50 percent matching grants to 98 preservation projects statewide.

The Park Square grant will pay for repairs to the fountain, which sits where the old elm once stood, for repairs to walkways within the park, for the restoration of monuments, and for the installation of new benches.

State Sen. Andrea F. Nuciforo Jr. said credit for the success of the city's grant application should go to Mayor Gerald S. Doyle Jr., Park Commission Chairman Robert Smith and Community Services Director Robert S. Mellace. The men paid a personal visit to Galvin to advocate for the grant

GRANTS, continued on B6

■ Grants from B1

earlier this year.

"Something like that [visit] makes an incredible difference," Nuciforo said. "It impresses upon people how important it is, demonstrates local commitment and makes it easier for me to voice support."

With the exception of the loss of the old elm in 1861, the centuries have done little to change Park Square since John Chandler Williams donated it in 1790. It was the site of the first agricultural fair in America, in 1810, and has always been the focal point of life — and traffic — in Pittsfield.

The preservation grant for First Baptist Church on South Street will allow the congregation, founded in the 1850s, to repair masonry on the front stairs of the church, replace its aging roof system, and repair the steeple, windows and cornices.

Thomas Jamula of the church's Restore the Splendor Committee, which is headed by Stewart Scace of Pittsfield, said the money would help give the church's trademark steeple a much-needed coat of paint. The church had contacted local elected officials to help promote the grant, and is "very grateful for their help," Jamula said. "We think this is a great thing for the community."

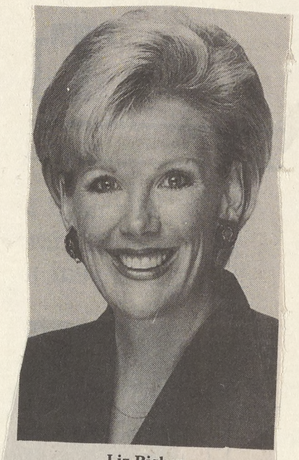
The church, designed by noted local architect Joseph McArthur Vance, was built in 1930. The congregation had previously worshipped in the Bullfinch Church on North Street, which fell into disrepair and was demolished in 1939. The Onota Building now stands on the site.

The clock in the present First Baptist Church steeple was taken from the Bullfinch Church.

"These grants are both relevant to what we're doing downtown," Nuciforo said. "This is the sort of stuff that will make our efforts pay off."

Elsewhere in the county, state grants for the repair and restoration of deteriorating structures were awarded to:

- Sherman Burbank Memorial Chapel in Williamstown, $135,000.
- Monterey Meeting House (First Congregational Church of Monterey), $100,000.
- Edith Wharton Restoration at The Mount in Lenox, a matching grant of $50,000 for the restoration of the terrace — including work to stabilize the substructure — and repairs to the south and east walls of the terrace.
- First Congregational Church in Great Barrington, $75,000.
- Trinity United Methodist Church in Ashley Falls (Sheffield), $12,000. 3/14/98



Liz Bishop

Channel 6 'road tour' coming to Park Square 4/30/98

PITTSFIELD — Mayor Gerald S. Doyle Jr., the Commission on Tourism and Downtown Pittsfield Inc., have announced that WRGB, Channel 6, Schenectady, N.Y., will bring its 70th anniversary "road tour" to Park Square tomorrow afternoon from 4:30 to 6:30.

The road tour is part of the station's anniversary celebration, which began on April 22 and will travel to 15 cities in the region in five weeks.

A feature story will be prepared on Pittsfield, and will be televised during the station's local newscast beginning at 5. Portions will be shown live.

Among the features of the broadcast will be a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the reopening of the Park Square Fountain by Mayor Doyle, the burial of a time-capsule comprised of historic city memorabilia to be opened in 25 years, the reading of a proclamation by local historian Robert Boland, and a portable stage to showcase the Taconic High School Band and other performers.

"This is a great opportunity for the citizens of Pittsfield to show their pride and enthusiasm for our community by coming out for this event," said Thomas D. McCann, chairman of the Tourism Commission.

Skating park at Common endorsed

By D.R. Bahlman
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — Construction of a "skate park" in the northeast corner of the Common park on First Street was endorsed last night by the Park Commission.

The proposal now will advance to the City Council for action at its May 12 meeting. The council will be asked to approve the expenditure of $30,000 to build the facility for skateboarding and in-line skating.

Proponents of the park, which is to occupy a blacktopped space of about 100 by 100 feet, said that it is likely to improve a section of the park which a nearby resident said is used as an "outdoor bathroom" and a gathering place for drug dealers.

Reclaiming 'dead space'

"When you provide life to a dead space, problems tend to go away," said Dennis Powell, director of the Christian Center.

Powell and others responded to comments made by John P. Murphy of Adam Street. Murphy, who stressed that he is not opposed to the construction of a skate park, questioned the wisdom of situating it in a relatively remote corner of the Common near railroad tracks. Murphy said the tracks may be used by pedestrians for easier access to the skate park. He also wondered aloud about the noise that will be generated by the facility, which, depending on its design, could consist of concrete forms including "launch ramps," "quarter pipes," half moons" and "steps."

According to a preliminary drawing submmitted to the commission, the park would be 100 feet away from the nearest residence.

Besides, said commission Chairman Robert Smith, a basketball court or a football field generates considerable noise.

5/5/98

SKATING, continued on B4

■ Skating from B1 5/5/98.

"No matter where we have open space that people use, there's some noise," he said. "... I think it will alleviate problems, not increase them."

City Councilor Richard Scapin of Ward 5 said that he supports the proposal. Scapin observed that the types of problems cited by Murphy exist in most of the city's 26 parks and can be addressed by an increased police presence if necessary.

The users of the park would keep it clean and safe, said James Martin of Howard Street, one of a group of eight skaters who attended last night's meeting.

'Ideal' site

The skaters view the proposed location as "ideal" for the park, said Martin.

Former City Councilor Peter G. Arlos said that while he believes the park is a necessary addition to the city's public recreational facilities, its amenities eventually will have to be moved to a more visible location.

"It will fail there," said Arlos. "This is a show-off sport. ... The big thing is that it's portable, so it won't cost anything to move it."

Amos Park cleanup

Park commission members Anthony G. Massimiano Jr., Clifford J. Nilan and Ben J. Kaplan agreed that benches for spectators should be included in the plans for the park, which could be completed by mid-July.

In other business last night, the commission approved a remediation plan for Dorothy Amos park. The plan, submitted by representatives of GE, calls for the removal of 4,000 cubic yards of PCB-contaminated soil from the West Street park. The work, which includes replacing sod and installation of new play equipment, is scheduled for completion by Aug. 1.

Also, the commission noted the formation of a committee to supervise the spending of a $20,000 state grant to enhance Silver Lake. Arlos, who will serve as chairman of the committee, said that its establishment is a requirement for the grant.

Arlos said that the committee aims to foster a cooperative relationship with GE, which he said will be asked to underwrite the cost of the rehabilitation of the lake and the area immediately surrounding it.

Kids' water play area eyed for Clapp Park

Clapp Park may soon be "Splash Park."

The park commission this past week gave preliminary approval to a plan for a "spray play" area at the West Housatonic Street site.

Community services director Bob Mellace estimates that the project would require some $40,000 of the park's previously allocated capital budget dollars.

"The idea is to offer something different and unique in one of our parks, especially in the park where we hold our summer activities," said Mellace.

The "spray play"' area — intended for young children — would be located near the current swingsets. It would include a "fire hydrant," "aqua-bench" and ground sprays.

The water would be controlled through a service box in a nearby storage shed/restroom facility.

"I think the beauty of this project is the water play feature," said Mellace. "This just attracts children ... kids just love water, especially on a hot summer's day."

Chairman Bob Smith said the idea is interesting but questioned whether the water area would be targeted by vandals. Ben Kaplan expressed safety concerns but applauded the concept. "On the whole, I think it's great .. it's unique, it looks like fun for a group of kids ... and it would support a lot of low to middle income people in nearby neighborhoods." 4/21 98

Fountain promotion

It's great to see the Park Square fountain working again — one stage of an ongoing upgrade planned at this historic center city location.

Mayor Gerald Doyle Jr. deserves particular praise for pounding the pavement to get extra state funds for this project.

Likewise past and present members of the parks commission — as well as community services director Bob Mellace — deserve perseverance awards for tenaciously pursuing this issue. The fountain has literally been an agenda item for years during the commission's meetings at Springside House.

To celebrate the resurrection of the fountain, city officials worked with WRGB-TV on a live telecast, part of a promotional campaign involving the New York television station's news operation.

The Friday event included music by the Taconic High School band as well as taped reports about Pittsfield.

Members of the crowd that gathered at Park Square even seemed to enjoy responding to the "Applause" and "Wave [WRGB] Pennants" signs WRGB personnel flashed during the telecast.

Cynics might suggest that the event had more to do with promoting WRGB than Pittsfield.

Perhaps this is actually a prelude to a renewed commitment by WRGB to devote greater resources to covering the Berkshires.

In particular, one can hope that the station has decided to disseminate balanced Pittsfield news instead of just occasional takes on PCB woes, layoffs and crime.

5/7/98

— Jonathan Levine

Dealing with skateboarders

Skateboarders too often act like the road warriors of sidewalks, playgrounds and parking lots, as Lenox's Morris Elementary School principal Robert Vaughn learned this week after a trio of skateboarders vandalized $1,000 worth of newly acquired picnic tables. Skateboarding is a fact of life, however. Communities that do not set aside an area for these pavement surfers are likely to suffer continued annoyance and damage. 7/16/98

On the agenda

The parks commission will conduct a public hearing Monday at 7 p.m. to gather input regarding proposed improvements to Park Square. State and local funds have been earmarked for projects at the center city site. 5/14/98

City seeking donation of holiday tree

PITTSFIELD — The Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services is asking anyone willing to donate an evergreen tree for use as Pittsfield's Christmas tree at Park Square to call their office at 499-9343 no later than Nov. 6.

Criteria to be used in selecting the tree will be: minimum height of approximately 30 feet; superior shape; ease of access to the tree for cutting; adequate room to safely fall the tree, and ease of transporting the tree.

In cooperation with the city's Department of Emergency Management, screening and selection of the tree will take place the week of Nov. 9. Cutting and installation of the tree at Park Square is scheduled for the week of Nov. 16 or 23.

Details regarding the date and program for the lighting of the tree will be made available at a later date. 10/27/98

Restoration plan at Dorothy Amos is approved by city department

By Carly Kinnas
Eagle Correspondent

PITTSFIELD — The Park Commission approved a restoration plan last night for Dorothy Amos Park, where PCB-contaminated soil is currently being excavated by GE. The project should be complete in time for area residents to enjoy the park's amenities during the upcoming summer months.

The commission also heard plans that would attempt to make the city's auxiliary police more visible to the community.

The project manager for the park restoration, Richard Gates, said the $150,000 project should be complete within four to six weeks — depending on the weather.

Slight delay

"We were slowed down a little with the rain," Gates said. "But we're not far from completion."

The plans, which were drawn up by Hill Engineering, call for an additional basketball court, bringing the total to three; the installation of new swing sets, a child's play set, benches, bleachers, lighting and walkways around the major components of the park. Plantings and trees will also be added.

Chairman Clifford J. Nilan commended Gates on the timing of the project, saying that he's glad it will be done in time for use this summer.

"It's a great benefit to the neighbors," Nilan said. "The basketball court is one of the most used elements there. [The plans] take care of the younger kids as well."

Gates said that the removal of 4,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil and its replacement with clean soil will be complete in about two weeks. He said the tainted soil will be disposed of at a federally licensed disposal facility in New York, south of Niagara Falls.

In other business, Ward 5 Councilor Richard A. Scapin asked that the commission help the auxiliary police to "get more involved" with city policing by implementing a program that would bring them into the city's parks.

"It's a showing for the people," Scapin said. "It'll make people more confident about going [into the parks]."

Auxiliary police Capt. Daniel Salzarulo said that the force currently has 17 members and that there is at least one car out patrolling the city each evening from 6 to 11. Salzarulo said that officers also patrol the area parks an average of four to six times per night.

"We already have documented breaking up nine parties at Onota Lake," Salzarulo said. "One time, they had 17 cars there. They also have fires and kegs."

Salzarulo said the auxiliary police were working with the environmental police in an attempt to begin patrolling on the lakes during summer weekends.

"You can see a lot on the lake that you can't on the shore," Salzarulo said. "We want to help enforce safety and drinking [laws]."

Nilan moved that the commission set up a meeting with Pittsfield Police Chief Anthony J. Riello, who is in charge of the auxiliary officers, and the commission to determine how they can be most effective for the city.

"We appreciate the help you have given us already," Nilan said to Salzarulo. "We certainly need it."

Also last night, the commission:

- Unanimously agreed to the terms of a licensing agreement between the city and National Pastime Inc., the owner of the Pittsfield Mets, that will bring the team to Wahconah Park for the 1999 season. The agreement also provides for options for the 2000 and 2001 seasons. (Related story, Page A1.)
- Approved a request by Maria Caccaviello for Downtown Pittsfield Inc. to position a portable gazebo on the Dunham Mall for the Festival Americana being held July 3 and 4.

Caccaviello said that the gazebo would be used as a stage for music groups during the weekend's events.

The commission approved the request as long as Downtown Pittsfield Inc. retained all other necessary permits and met with city personnel regarding the gazebo's placement.

6/16/98



PCB cleanup

Joel Librizzi / Berkshire Eagle Staff 6/24/98

Contractors work at Dorothy Amos Park on West Street in Pittsfield yesterday, removing PCBs.

Bids accepted for work on city tennis, hoop courts

By Carly Kinnas
Eagle Correspondent

PITTSFIELD — The city's purchasing department has received two bids for the sealing and resurfacing of basketball and tennis courts at four of the city's parks.

Vermont Recreational was the apparent low bidder with a proposal of $10,259 for work which the contract specifies should be completed by the end of August. Vermont Tennis Court submitted the only other proposal with a bid of $16,433.

Both bids will later be reviewed by city Purchasing Agent Robert B. Tone Jr. to determine which, if either, contractor will be chosen to complete the work.

Robert S. Mellace, director of the city Department of Community Services, said that the proposal calls for court sealing and crack repair to be completed on one basketball and two tennis courts at Lakewood Park, as well as additional repairs for basketball courts at the Common, Clapp and Deming parks. Mellace said that if the contract goes through as planned, the department also hopes to repair the basketball court at Kirvin Park.

6/24/98

Auxiliary police patrolling parks

The auxiliary police and the parks department are looking to expand their cooperative relationship.

City councilor Rick Scapin told the parks commission on Monday that the all-volunteer officers can help keep the city's parks safe.

"They represent our city and the police department in a great way," said Scapin. "I'd like to see them being used more in the parks .... It's a great sign to see a police vehicle driving into a city park."

Community services director Bob Mellace noted that the auxiliary police already patrol parks. "Anything they can do to help us out, they're more than welcome to," he said.

Dan Salzarulo, the auxiliary group's captain, said that the volunteers often patrol Burbank Park and Pontoosuc Lake. "It's something the chief believes in as part of community policing," said Salzarulo. "We've broken up nine parties at Onota Lake in the past couple of weeks ... It's been working out well."

Parks chairman Cliff Nilan commended the volunteers: "We appreciate all the help they can give us, we certainly need it," he said.

6/18/98



Joel Librizzi / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Paving crews installed three new basketball courts at Dorothy Amos Park yesterday, one more than the West Side park had when the discovery of PCB contamination in the soil closed it last summer. After the courts are finished, GE will install new playground equipment, fencing and signage before the park is reopened to the public.

Park Square plans told to city panel

By D.R. Bahlman
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — Resurfaced walkways, period lighting and restoration of the Civil War memorial statue are among the improvements planned for Park Square, a city commission was told last night.

However, making the park more accessible by "moving" or extending it to the south and rerouting east-west traffic along its north side will be a project for another day, the Park Commission learned.

Extension possible

Extension of the park toward Bank Row and eliminating the current circular traffic pattern are suggested in some early versions of plans for a "gateway" beautification project proposed for South Street between Park Square and Route 20.

That work will not be funded by a grant that Pittsfield has obtained to enhance the park, said Peter Wells of Berkshire Design Group Inc., the Northampton firm commissioned by the city to plan the improvements.

Discussion of the issue was prompted by a question from Park Commission member Ben J. Kaplan, who asked Wells for his assessment of access to the park by pedestrians.

"I'm not pleased with it," Wells replied.

Kaplan has endorsed a preliminary

5/19/98

SQUARE, continued on B4

■ Square from B1

proposal to extend Park Square to the south, nearly flush with Bank Row. Last year, he referred to the park as "an island."

In 1997, the Massachusetts Historical Commission approved the city's application for a grant of $140,000. One of the conditions attached to the grant is that it be matched by local funds. It also cannot be used to pay design fees or for construction that is not essential to restoration of the park's historical features, said Wells.

For instance, said Robert S. Mellace, the city's director of community services, the state historical commission might agree to the city's use of grant money to restore the facade of the fountain in the park. However, it would not pay for the fountain's plumbing.

The commission endorsed Wells' overall plan for Park Square and praised several of its features, notably the installation of wheelchair ramps at its eastern and western ends, the improvement of paths, the development of a turf and tree management plan, and the addition of period lighting.

Park Commission member Robert J. Smith said he wants to assure that the city gets the "biggest bang for the buck," and wondered aloud whether any future extension of Park Square would have an impact on the currently planned improvements.

"I'd hate to see us having to tear anything up," he said.

Wells said that's unlikely because any extension of the park would be in keeping with the character of its landscaping and other elements.

Work on Park Square is scheduled to begin next year; the deadline for use of the grant is spring of 1999.

Also last night, the commission learned that a bid of $110,000 for the construction of a street hockey facility and restoration of basketball courts at Crane Park has been received. The bid is roughly in line with the funding the city has allocated for the project: $105,000.

Mellace said that Mayor Gerald S. Doyle Jr. has expressed his support for making up the $5,000 difference with additional city funds.

Last year, an advertisement for bids brought several, the lowest of which was $123,000.

Ward 2 Councilor Timothy J. DiSilva said at the time that the costs could be reduced by adjusting the specifications for the project.

Crane Park is situated near the intersection of Springside Avenue and Benedict Road.

5/19/98

Council approves new 'skate park'

5/13/98

By D.R. Bahlman
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — The City Council last night approved spending $30,000 to build a "skate park" in the northeast corner of the Common park on First Street.

The council's unanimous vote was met with applause from a group of young skateboarders and in-line skaters who have worked for several years to establish such a park in Pittsfield.

"These young men have done everything we've asked them to," Carl Smith, a member of the Youth Commission, told the council. Smith said that the group has cleared a succession of bureaucratic hurdles to achieve its goal.

Effort noted

Councilor at large Jamie R. Williamson also praised the skaters' persistence and observed that their stewardship of the park will be the more devoted because of the amount of effort they expended to have it built.

The park, which may be completed by July, will occupy a blacktopped space of about 100 by 100 feet. It will consist of concrete forms that facilitate the performance of various maneuvers, many of them airborne.

That aspect of the sport worried City Councilor James J. Massery of Ward 6, who proposed that the council enact an ordinance requiring the use of helmets in the skate park.

Users of all city parks do so at their own risk, said City Councilor Richard A. Scapin of Ward 5. Scapin added that the Park Commission has jurisdiction over the parks and that adopting a regulation concerning helmet use would be in the commission's discretion.

The City Council can enact ordinances dealing with the use of any city property, said Councilor at large Angelo C. Stracuzzi. Stracuzzi also noted that City Councilor Timothy J. DiSilva of Ward 2 has been a longtime supporter of construction of a skate park and deserves recognition for his efforts.

Late in the meeting, the council adopted Massery's motion to refer a proposed ordinance requiring the use of helmets at the skate park to its Committee on Ordinances and Rules.

In other action last night, the council gave preliminary approval to an ordinance requiring eight votes (two-thirds) to fill any vacant city job. The vote was close: six in favor to five opposed. Currently, only a majority vote is needed.

Stracuzzi, who sponsored the ordinance, has argued that the council should be more accountable for the city's hiring practices. Opponents contend that the city's Personnel Review Board provides adequate oversight.

In addition to Stracuzzi, those voting in favor of the ordinance — which must be approved on a "second reading" before being submitted to Mayor Gerald S. Doyle Jr. for signature — were William D. Barry, DiSilva, Joseph O. Guzzo, Massery and Williamson.

City Council President Thomas E. Hickey Jr. voted in opposition, as did James M. Boyle, Paul M. Dowd, Gary S. Grunin and Scapin.

Also last night, the council unanimously reaffirmed statements made in a 1997 letter signed by city officials and state legislators advising the federal Environmental Protection Agency that the city does not support the "capping" of PCB hot spots on residential properties.

The council acted at the behest of residents of Longview Terrace. They contend that General Electric Co. should be obliged to perform a total cleanup of a residential property it purchased on Longview Terrace, despite the provisions of a regulation which permits the computation of a cleanup standard based on an average level of contamination for the entire property.

Hickey conceded that the city's negotiating team, of which he was a member, was not aware of the provision in the regulation, which he said is an enormously thick document.

Barry, however, said he recalls that GE officials agreed to a total cleanup of the property. Hickey said that the meeting was videotaped and that he would seek confirmation of Barry's recollection by reviewing the tape and other materials.

The Pittsfield Gazette May 7, 1998

Parks board affirms support for Common skateboarding

The parks commission voted Monday to ask Mayor Gerald Doyle, Jr. to appropriate $30,000 for a skateboard park at the Common on First Street.

Commissioners reiterated support for the proposal following an informal public hearing at Springside House.

Among those speaking in favor of the plan was Carl Smith of the Berkshire Prevention Alliance. Smith said that teen skateboarders have been working for more than two years to get a place of their own.

"They have done all the things they were asked to do," said Smith.

This past summer, Smith helped coordinate an interim skateboarding program in the parking lot behind the Froio Senior Center. He said that, contrary to the image some adults harbor toward skateboarders, the program ran smoothly.

"They were responsible, they cleaned up their stuff, they policed it," said Smith. "This broad brush everyone is painting skateboarders with, it needs to be put away — it's the wrong brush."

James Martin, who spoke on behalf of several fellow teen skateboarders who attended the meeting, echoed that theme.

"A lot of these guys do police it themselves," said Martin. "It's going to be kept up."

However John Murphy of Adams Street near the Common expressed reservations about the location of the skateboarding facility.

Stressing that he thinks skateboarding is a worthwhile sport, Murphy questioned whether the site's proximity to railroad tracks would worsen illicit activities.

"It's not a safe location near the tracks," said Murphy.

Commission member Cliff Nilan said that locating the skateboard facility in the northeast corner of the park might improve the park and reduce transient problems.

"What we're hoping is that this will lessen the problems," said Nilan.

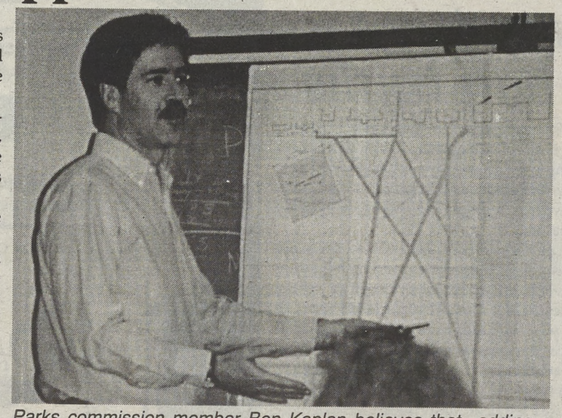
"It will worsen it," countered Murphy.

Central location needed

City councilor Rick Scapin said that if problems arise, city officials will respond. But he termed the Common "an excellent spot, centrally located."

Scapin said skateboarders desperately need a designated home: "These kids have been every place ... they've been kicked out of everywhere in the city."

Commission chairman Robert Smith said that the skateboarding shouldn't be any more intrusive than basketball and football, which are already held at the Common. And the skateboarding could make the park more active and less prone to problems, he added.



Parks commission member Ben Kaplan believes that adding a skateboard facility at the Common will improve the park.

"A lot of stuff that took place in that corner won't anymore," predicted Smith.

Equity is important, the chairman also stated: "I want to make sure that because it's not girls' softball and is skateboarding that we're allowing these kids the same opportunity we afford other youth."

Former city councilor Peter Arlos applauded action to have a skateboarding facility but decried the location.

"We've all dallied on this so it's good to see action," said Arlos. But he predicted that the Common location will fail because "it's out of the way and this is a show-off sport."

Arlos added, however, that since the planned skateboarding fixtures are moveable, they can be transferred to another site if his prediction is accurate.

Dennis Powell, director of the Christian Center, added his support to the plan for the Common.

"When you provide life to a dead space, a lot of times that will cause the problems to go away," he said. "

Park commissioner Ben Kaplan echoed that idea. "This is just going to breathe new life into the area," he said.

The commission voted 5-0 to endorse preliminary plans for the facility and ask Doyle to appropriate funds, preferably at this coming Tuesday's city council meeting.

Commissioners said they'd like to see the facility open in July.

A park comes back to life

Dorothy Amos Park, closed last year after its soil was found to be contaminated with PCBs, reopened this week with new playground equipment, benches and an additional basketball court. Although the General Electric Company was not directly responsible for the pollution at the site of a former scrap yard, GE volunteered to renovate the park. The company describes the cleanup as a gift to the city, which it is and for which the West Street neighborhood will be grateful, but clearly the company was buying good will at a time when the public had become deeply concerned about residential PCB contamination. It was a wise investment. 10/18/98

The Pittsfield Gazette June 18, 1998

Amos park will reopen next month

Dorothy Amos Park should reopen with six weeks, according to engineers working to remove PCBs and lead from the West Street site.

Representatives of General Electric's remediation team updated the parks commission on Monday.

An additional basketball court, expanded lighting, new swingsets and benches are among the amenities that will be erected in the next month.

"We think this is a nice restoration for the park," said project manager Richard Gates.

Cliff Nilan, chairman of the parks commission, concurred: "I think the park looks fabulous ... This will be a great benefit to the people in that neighborhood."

The playground has long been among the busiest in the city, particularly its two lighted basketball courts. When PCBs and lead were discovered at the site in August, the entire park was fenced off.

A limited portion of the park reopened this spring but is closed now while the contaminants are removed.

Gates estimated the value of the new amenities at $150,000.

In the coming weeks, community services director Bob Mellace will oversee the details of General Electric's restoration plan.

GE, city planning Sept. ceremony for renovated Dorothy Amos Park

8/7/98

By Theo Stein
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — General Electric and the city are planning a September ribbon-cutting ceremony to unveil a $150,000 renovation of Dorothy Amos Park following completion of PCB remediation work this month. The date has not been set so far.

GE contractors removed 7,000 tons of contaminated soil from the little West Street park this summer before installing three basketball courts, according to company spokesman Debra Townsend.

The final touches

Scheduled for delivery and installation soon are bleachers, picnic tables, swingsets, a creative playscape and landscaping elements like trees and shrubs, paid for by GE.

The city is providing a new wood rail fence and signing through Community Development Block grants, according to Robert Mellace, the city's director of community services.

"By the time we're all through, it's going to be a totally renovated park," Mellace said Wednesday. "It's going to be really nice."

Meanwhile, cleanups at two of the so-called "core" properties on Hathaway Street and Longview Terrace are continuing.

Crews from Maxymillian Technologies are backfilling the property at 14 Hathaway St., which belongs to retired firefighter Merton Amuso, as site restoration proceeds.

Work started last week at the 47-49 Longview Terrace property now owned by GE, where the highest levels of residential contamination have been discovered in a portion of the lot formerly used as a backyard scrap and salvage operation.

Yesterday, a giant excavator continued to eat away at the yard, loading 18-wheel dump trucks bound for New York state.

The contamination at Dorothy Amos Park is also attributed to a former scrap operation.

Cleanup of the final core property on Benedict Road, the first of roughly 100 residential fill sites to be discovered, is set to begin next week after GE and its owner settled differences over reimbursement for his relocation during the project. Another project at a house lot on Elberon Avenue is also expected to commence next week, Townsend said.

GE and the Department of Environmental Protection are completing plans to clean six contiguous properties on Richardson Street and Herie Avenue, about a half-mile from the Longview-Ventura cleanup work, this fall.

More fall work

Also slated for the fall are projects on Valentine Road, and on Dorchester Avenue and Knox Street, adjacent to the first group of properties excavated in the Longfellow Avenue-Edison Avenue area.

To date, more than 30,000 tons of soil been removed and shipped to two hazardous waste disposal sites in New York from GE's residential cleanup program, Townsend said.

Roughly halfway through the construction season, GE is on track to complete all of the properties scheduled for cleanup this year, according to Anna Symington, acting section chief of the DEP's Bureau of Waste Site Cleanup.

"We're very pleased with the progress to date," said Jane Magee, GE's manager of the Pittsfield/Housatonic Remediation Project. "The core properties are either completed or underway, and we're well on track toward our goal of remediating 62 properties during this construction season."

PITTSFIELD: The Department of Community Services/Parks and Recreation has announced that the last regular day of supervised swimming at the public beach at Onota Lake will be tomorrow. The public beach, however, will be supervised for the Labor Day weekend, Sept. 5-7. Information: 499-9343.

8/29/98

Plan put forth for Silver Lake

By Greg Sukiennik
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — The Silver Lake Management Committee on Wednesday night heard a plan for turning the shores of a clean, fishable, boatable Silver Lake into a mile-long path surrounded by flowers, trees and places to take in scenic views.

Michael Melle of Cummington, who volunteered to assemble ideas collected through public input, asked an audience of about 20 people to envision an idyllic park in the center of the city, rather than a body of water surrounded by and suffering from the legacy of heavy industry.

At the center of Melle's vision for Silver Lake is a footpath similar to the Bridge of Flowers in Shelburne Falls, an old trolley bridge which has been turned into a 400-foot-long garden of perennials and annuals. Melle noted that bridge attracts thousands of visitors each year; 24,000 people signed the guest book last year. Think what a mile-long floral path around a re-

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LAKE, continued on B4

Lake from B1

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claimed Silver Lake could do, he asked.

Talks between the city, government regulators and General Electric over how pollution should be cleaned up include Silver Lake. The lake is heavily contaminated with PCBs and other pollutants found on the GE industrial site.

The Silver Lake Management Committee has the task of formulating a reuse plan for the lake. The group has already chartered a study of the lake by a consultant.

"We want this to be the people's project," committee Chairman Peter G. Arlos said. "This needs to be unique and outstanding. That's the only way we're going to get funding."

The path would include:

- A deck on the shore of the lake that looks towards the Pittsfield High dome.
- The use of rock landscaping to create jetties into the lake and landscaping along the shore.
- Fencing along areas passing through or near back yards, which would include gates for residents to use and lock.
- Cafes and restaurants along the East Street shore, or in the former England Brothers warehouse on Fourth Street.

A few audience members who own property abutting Silver Lake were concerned about losing their privacy, and about safety concerns. But others noted that the trade-off would be a clean lake surrounded by flowers and greenery. Melle also stressed that his vision is merely a proposal, and that he was at the meeting to take more input.

The board also added a seventh member, Roberta "Bobbie' Orsi of 50 Longview Terrace.

It's Valenti who is intolerant

To the Editor of THE EAGLE:—

Unfortunately, at this time of year I have become accustomed to the usual barrage of attacks directed against the so-called politically correct who have taken public positions against the use of public space to promote the practice of one specific religion over another. Dan Valenti's column "Crecheless and Foolish" (Eagle, December 6) raised this type of assault to a disturbing level.

I found Mr. Valenti's words incendiary for a couple of reasons. First, he suggests that those individuals who oppose any governmental endorsement of one religious practice over another are somehow responsible for the evisceration of Christmas. He points his accusatory finger directly at them and practically labels this group as the modern day Grinch who cold-heartedly is attempting to steal Christmas from the majority of our citizens. This characterization is untrue, harmful and actually undermines the very spirit of Christmas, which promotes good will toward men.

Mr. Valenti misses the point made by the Pittsfield Council of Churches, the Rev. J. Michael Povey and Rabbi Dennis Ross. The creche is an unmistakable religious item as compared to a cultural symbol. It depicts the birth of Jesus as outlined in the Gospel. Those of us who support the notion that government should not be viewed as endorsing a certain religious practice are not against that religious practice at all. In fact, like the esteemed clergy to which Mr. Valenti refers, I sincerely value and respect the beauty and meaning of the creche. Religious practice however, is highly personal and belongs in our homes and houses of worship, not on public property.

Second, Mr. Valenti attempts to draw a connection between the presence of the Holocaust Memorial on the grounds of the county court house and the creche. Mr. Valenti should know the Holocaust Memorial commemorates one of the darkest chapters of modern day history where one nation attempted to systematically exterminate an entire people. Its existence serves as a reminder of the evil man is capable of perpetrating against his fellow man. It has nothing to do with Jewish religious practice. To equate the memorial with the creche distorts not only the meaning of both but also attempts to garner support for his position by referring to an illusory double standard.

Our national heritage is based upon religious freedom and diversity. Rather than using the spirit of Christmas to sarcastically attack a minority viewpoint, it is more appropriate to apply the Christmas spirit to embrace tolerance, sensitivity and respect for all of our citizens. There is plenty of room for all of us to worship according to the dictates of our own conscience. A request that our local government endorse one specific religious practice only works to separate and divide us.

RICHARD A. SIMONS
Pittsfield, Dec. 8, 1998

12/10/98

9/24/98



Park Square holiday issue resurfaces

A city man on Monday launched a campaign to place a nativity scene at Park Square for the Christmas season.

Jon Papa formally petitioned the parks commission for permission to resume the holiday tradition.

"This can be kind of a dicey, touch-and-go proposition," said Papa.

The petitioner said that he is not asking the city to erect a religious display but for permission to do so himself at the public park. Papa said that past disputes over religious displays concerned the city's direct involvement.

"I myself would put the nativity scene on Park Square," he said.

See NATIVITY page 7

Nativity request resurrects debate

continued from page 1

"I am asking you to allow me, as a private citizen, to express my religious beliefs."

The Partridge Road resident said that the city has allowed the use of Park Square for political events, such as Gerald Doyle Jr.'s mayoral campaign kickoff and an annual Hiroshima Day demonstration.

Papa added that the city puts up commercialized holiday decorations throughout downtown. He said that displays of reindeer and other symbols trivialize the holiday.

"That's not what Christmas is all about," he said. "It's about Christ."

The parks commission took no action on Papa's request, instead referring it to the city solicitor for review.

Commissioner Ben Kaplan, however, expressed concerns.

Kaplan lauded Papa's spiritual emphasis — "I think people with great faith are to be commended" — but suggested the desire to use public property "may be misdirected."

The commissioner said that a coordinated effort by city religious leaders has helped ensure that the views of one faith do not impede on the faith of others. As part of this mutual understanding, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church erects a nativity scene on its front lawn, across from Park Square.

"I think if we voted otherwise as a commission, it would open up a can of worms," said Kaplan. "It's a very sensitive issue.... we're trying not to cross any religious lines."

Papa replied that the separation of church and state does not apply to him as an individual: "I'm not the government ... I have a right to profess my faith in a public forum."

Kaplan said that Park Square is a city-owned property funded through tax dollars, not personal property.

"I don't think anyone in the room would be upset with Jon Papa [putting up a display] on Jon Papa's land," said Kaplan.

Parks commission chairman Cliff Nilan suggested the referral to the solicitor for a general review.

Papa said that he began the dialogue at this time to allow a thorough review. He said he expected the commission to refer the issue to the solicitor.

9/24/98

July 30, 1998

Plans call for landscaping the property and improving access to an adjacent park.

Development in Coltsville: Three houses to be razed

By D.R. Bahlman
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — About 25 residents of Coltsville gathered last night in the police substation on Crane Avenue to hear details of a plan to tear down three vacant houses on Cheshire Road and construct a mixed-use building on the site.

The property, situated on the east side of Cheshire Road just north of the former International House of Pancakes and across from an entrance to the Allendale Shopping Center, is owned by Robert K. George.

Currently, there are three houses on George's contiguous lots. Two of the houses were condemned by the city on Dec. 14, 1997.

Zone change needed

George, who attended the meeting with his brothers, Donald and Raymond, and his attorney, Richard A. Simons, said he intends to seek a change in the lots' zoning from residential to "grouped business."

There are no definite plans for the new building's use, said Simons, although a mix of office and retail is possible. He said that the George family "wants to clean up that parcel" and construct a Colonial-style building on it. A curb cut for the site was made during the most recent reconstruction of Cheshire Road.

The family intends to landscape the property and to preserve — and improve — access to West Memorial Park, which consists of about four acres of city-owned land that lies just east of George's property. The land was donated to the city by the West family in 1950.

83 parking spaces

Preliminary sketches of George's plan for his site show 83 parking spaces around the building, but George said it's unlikely there will be that many.

"I just wanted to show the maximum possible build-out," he said.

The zone change is appropriate because George's property is surrounded by business and commercial uses, said Simons.



Joel Librizzi / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Dilapidated house on Cheshire Road is one of three the George family plans to have demolished to make way for a new commercial building.

"It's really just filling in the puzzle," he said.

Although they expressed support for George's plan to raze the houses, several residents of the area said they wish that was the extent of the project.

"If you really wanted to help the city, that could be accomplished by tearing down the houses and donating the land to the city, but I know that's probably not going to happen" said Mary L. Ward of Williamsburg Terrace.

Ward said that traffic on Cheshire Road does not flow smoothly, a condi-

GEORGE, continued on B4

■ George from B1

tion which she said will not be improved by another building on the road. She also questioned the need for more retail and office space.

"There is no operation scheduled to go in there," said George. "... I'll work on the property. It may be a while. I'm certainly not going to build on [speculation]. It's too risky."

High traffic volume

When the new Berkshire County House of Correction is built, traffic on the road will increase even more, said City Councilor William D. Barry of Ward 1, who helped organize the meeting.

George replied that Coltsville has been a high-traffic area for many years, well before the construction of the Berkshire Mall, the Berkshire Crossing shopping center and other retail destinations.

Vincent J. Hebert of Rose Terrace urged the audience to keep tabs on the project and not to underestimate the value of West Memorial Park as a recreational resource.

"Whatever happens over there, remember that's the closest place for kids to play," he said.

George plans to consult with city officials about possible improvements to the park, said Simons.

7/30/98

The Pittsfield Gazette August 13, 1998



Work before play

The General Electric-funded PCB cleanup of West Street's Dorothy Amos park is nearing completion. Officials hope for an early September ribbon cutting.

A crew from Maxymillian Construction, including Paul Laviolette, Chris Dindio, Bill Rowse and Mark McNeice, is putting the finishing touches on the $150,000 project, which saw the removal of 7,000 tons of contaminated soil.

The site will feature three basketball courts, picnic tables, swingsets, a multi-activity play center as well as trees and shrubs. The city plans to install a new wood rail fence.

■ Parks from B1

what makes things like this happen," Mellace said.

Crane Park, in front of the former Crane School, was slated for a roller blading park and roller hockey rink nearly three years ago in the 1996 capital budget passed by the council. Ward 2 Councilor Timothy J. DiSilva had long pushed for the project, and Lancaster Burke Construction of Dalton is completing the $109,000 job. Helping to pay for the project are a $5,000 grant from Wal-Mart, dating back to when the Berkshire Crossing project was approved, and $29,000 from athletic footwear maker Reebok.

"It seemed to take forever. I had a lot people calling me about it," DiSilva said yesterday, "but I'm glad it's moving forward." He is hopeful the park will be ready in time for youngsters to use it through the fall months.

DiSilva is also happy for any role the planned in-line skating park played in helping make the skateboarding park at the Common a reality. "These activities are separate, and it's important that the Parks Commission recognized that," he said.

Burbank Park

As reported last week, contractor D.R. Billings was the apparent low bidder for $868,980 in improvements to Burbank Park at Onota Lake. They will include improvements of the fishing pier, boat ramp, the north beach and Lakeway Drive through the park. Mellace expects that work will begin in mid-September.

Basketball courts at the Common and Deming, Lakewood, Kirvin and Clapp parks and the tennis courts at Lakewood will all be repaired and sealed. In addition, the Clapp Park baseball field, the home of the city's two American Legion teams and the Pittsfield High varsity baseball squad, will have its infield completely resodded and rebuilt.

In a related project, Dorothy Amos Park, which is being rebuilt by General Electric as part of the company's cleanup of PCBs found in residential areas, is expected to reopen in September.

8/27/98

Recreational courts to be closed next week

PITTSFIELD — The Department of Community Services/Parks and Recreation has announced that the basketball courts at the Common, Clapp, Lakewood, Deming, Wahconah and Kirvin parks, and the tennis courts at Lakewood will be closed temporarily the week of Sept. 14, weather permitting, to allow for crack repair and court resealing. Information: 499-9343.

9/11/98

Upgrades planned for parks in Pittsfield

By Greg Sukiennik
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — Work will begin, or be completed, on a number of long-awaited recreational enhancements in city parks this fall, including a skateboarding park in the Common and substantial improvements to Burbank Park.

Elsewhere in the city, an in-line skating and roller hockey "rink" is presently under construction at Crane Park, and playground equipment is being provided for Allen Heights Park at the end of Somerset Avenue. The much-used baseball diamond at Clapp Park will be rebuilt, the tennis courts at Lakewood Park will be resurfaced, and basketball courts throughout the city will be patched and resealed.

Team efforts

None of these improvements happened by themselves, said city Director of Community Services Robert S. Mellace. He said funding from the administration of Mayor Gerald S. Doyle Jr. and the City Council played a big part, as did the support of the Board of Parks Commissioners and the city's Department of Public Works.

For example, members of the city Youth Commission lobbied for years for a skateboard park, so that the city's growing legion of skateboarders could have a place to practice their sport without getting in other people's way. City councilors, including former Councilor at large Peter G. Arlos, and the Board of Park Commissioners, supported the concept, and the council approved it this year.

Playground equipped

Or take Allen Heights Park. Most city residents don't know it's there. "Neither did we until we moved into the neighborhood," said Tanya Grillo who with her husband Glenn spea headed efforts to win playgroun equipment for the park.

The Grillons, of Somerset Avenue, have two children, ages 5 and 1½, and live in a neighborhood that recently has attracted a number of young families with young children. "We had this nice, beautiful, barren park just waiting for activity," Tanya Grillon said.

The Grillons organized a group of residents to work on the project, and they worked with Mellace to design a play area neighborhood that children would enjoy. The equipment is due to be installed in the next two weeks, and preparations have been made by park maintenance personnel and the city Water Department's backhoe.

"A lot of people working together is

8/27/98

PARKS, continued on B4

Two city skate parks will open

Separate facilities target skateboaders, skaters & hockey players

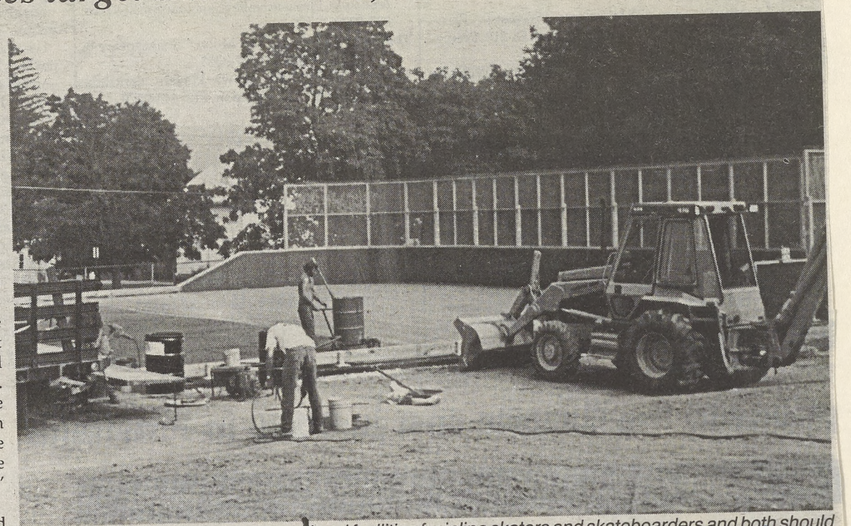
By Anthony Fyden

For those who like to put wheels on their heels, Pittsfield's going to get a lot more fun.

Two new recreational facilities — a skateboard park at the Pittsfield Common and an inline skating street hockey rink at Crane Park — will open this week, perhaps by Friday.

While the parks were developed as separate projects, officials believe their opening represents a step towards meeting the community's evolving needs.

"There are new activities in the '90s and our parks department should address these needs," said ward 2 city councilor Tim DiSilva. "We've had blinders on. We provide basketball courts and we've got an abundance of baseball diamonds, we have the football league. There's more to recreation than these three sports."



The city is rolling out two new recreational facilities for inline skaters and skateboarders and both should be open soon.

9/24/98

Something different

The skateboarding park is tucked away in a corner of the First Street Common. The 100 by 100 ft. site will feature a host of prefabricated skating equipment with names like "Quarter pipe," "launch ramp," "fallout ramp" and "half moon."

The Crane Park hockey rink — located along Springside Avenue and Benedict Road — features a full size street hockey rink with rails, goals, back boards and benches. In addition to the rink, the project included several other improvements to Crane Park, such as a refurbished basketball court and fencing.

While the idea of providing facilities for wheeled sports has been around for a while, getting them built was a drawn out process. The concept was first brought forward nearly four years ago, boosted by DiSilva and former at-large city councilor Peter Arlos.

Officials clashed over the location of the park, what sports should be accommodated and whether the expense was justified. This year, the projects came together.

See PARKS page 15

The Pittsfield Gazette September 24, 1998

New park facilities welcome wheels

continued from page 1

DiSilva believes that Pittsfield is ahead of the curve. Other communities, such as North Adams, are also considering building wheeled skating parks.

"We're setting precedents," DiSilva said. "I think it's going to be a jewel in Berkshire County. This is really something we can use year round except when there's snow on the ground."

There's no doubt that sports such as in-line skating and skateboarding have gained popularity in recent years. Television events such as the "X-Games" celebrate the creative and gravity-defying aspects of the sports.

Even when the skate park idea was brought forward, it took a persistent voice from a group of young skaters to move the process forward. "I think this is great because we've worked hard at this for a couple of years," said Shane Rose, 15, a Pittsfield High School student. "A lot of times, I didn't think it would ever get done."

An informal group of skaters began attending and speaking at parks commission and city council meetings. The teens met with city officials, such as parks commissioner Robert Smith, as well as police officers and other community leaders.

The skaters made an impression on officials as articulate spokespersons for their sport. "They're a good bunch of kids, I believe," said ward 5 city councilor Rick Scapin. "They're proud of this and they should be."

The teens believe that they were fighting not only a political process but a negative perception among the public as well. Some officials blamed skateboarders for destroying public property and frightening residents. In the absence of a park, skaters used streets and parking garages, often getting chased away by police or business owners.

Scapin says that the teens' persistency impressed him. "The bottom line is it gets them off the streets," he said. "This has been a long time coming; the process takes a long time."

But once the parks open, Scapin noted, he expects the teens to limit their street skating and be responsible for the equipment and facilities. "These kids are going to have to pretty much police themselves," he said. "They're going to have to show us that they are mature enough to handle this. I think they are."

Skater Dan Nolan, 15, who has been pursuing the skate parks for three years, said he's learned a few things about the political process. "At first they didn't seem like they were listening to us," he recalled. "But after a while, when we kept on coming to the meetings, they started to listen."

Nolan believes that both parks will draw crowds of skaters — although he doesn't believe that teens will stay off the streets altogether.

"We're still going to skate at other places," he said. "But not as much."

And while the parks commission voted to make helmet use mandatory at both parks, Nolan is not sure that all skaters will don headwear. "That's probably going to be hard to enforce," he said.

Community services director Robert Mellace said that a "ribbon cutting" ceremony could be scheduled at both parks as early as Friday. On Wednesday workers were putting finishing touches on the Crane Avenue park while the prefabricated equipment was delivered to the Common.

Judging from the preliminary interest, Mellace believes that the parks will be popular. "I imagine it's going to be heavily used," he said.

Mellace noted that "everything would have to fall into place just right," for a Friday opening at the sites. In the meantime, he's asking skaters to stay out of the locations until they officially open, to prevent hurting themselves or damaging the equipment.

"All we're asking these kids to do is be patient," he said.

Regulations set for new parks

Helmets will be required at Pittsfield's new skate parks.

The parks commission voted Monday to post regulations requiring use of the safety devices.

Commissioners had grappled with the issue for several months, with a city council subcommittee adding its voice as well.

"The ordinances & rules committee felt they should be mandatory," community services director Bob Mellace told the parks commission on Monday.

A central question for the commission, said chairman Cliff Nilan, is "if you make it mandatory, how do you enforce it?"

The commission ultimately decided to "require" helmets and "recommend" elbow, knee and hand pads.

The Crane Park rink will not be open to unsupervised children under 8; the skate park at the Common will not be open to unsupervised children under 10.

The skate rink will be available for leagues who must abide with the park department's permitting process.

Otherwise the regulations will be comparable:

- hours of operation will be 9 a.m. to dusk
- glass containers and alcohol will be prohibited
- boom boxes and loud music will be banned
- bicycles will not be allowed

Complete regulations will be posted at both parks. "These rules may be amended at some point," said Mellace.

9/24/98

BMX track concept supported but finding right site may be complex

A crowd of three dozen people expressed support Monday for a BMX mountain bike facility at a city park, though some Springside Park advocates voiced concerns about possible locations.

After wide-ranging input, the parks commission vowed to pursue the project and evaluate possible sites.

"There are kids out there who do not play soccer or football," said commissioner Bob Smith. "It's time we supported not just Little League, Pop Warner and soccer ... I'm for it 100 percent."

The idea has gained momentum in the past few months. In particular, Smith and city councilor Rick Scapin have worked with kids and parents to discuss options.

"There has to be 300 or 400 kids out there looking for a BMX field," said Scapin. "I never realized how important this was to them ... There's an outcry out there for it."

Scapin proposed Monday that a portion of Springside Park east of Reid Middle School and north of the Springside House area be designated as the BMX site.

The BMX facility would likely include a track — not necessarily an oval — with jumps that the bicyclists could use for tricks.

The ward 5 councilor stressed that his site was just a suggestion, intended to elicit feedback: "Maybe this isn't the right place but I think it's time to bring it ahead."

Residents affiliated with Springside Park groups offered support for the general concept.

Judith Macpherson said that after careful consideration she "actually supports" the BMX concept. However she doesn't like Scapin's suggested location.

"I'm worried about safety and the isolation of that site," she said. "It should be in a visible location ... more out in the open."

Mark Miller, whose family donated the land that became Springside Park, endorsed adding a BMX location. "I think this is a very wholesome activity that would be well situated in the park," he said.

If the track is properly placed at the park, said Miller, it could benefit both kids and the property as a whole by encouraging greater use.

Nancy Eppley echoed Miller's comments, saying "my only concern is the location."

Bill Kerrigan questioned the accessibility of Scapin's proposed location, terming it "quite remote."

Expected opposition

Bob Hazelton, one of the proponents of the BMX facility, welcomed the support from the Springside Park groups.

"I thought there might be some opposition," he said.

Having a designated BMX facility will "take the kids from behind Warner Cable," he said.

Springside Park arboretum advocate Elizabeth Kulas expressed concern that a facility not interfere with the natural projects at the park.

"It must co-exist with the nature trails," she said. "Could we have the wildlife in the middle [of the park] and other activities at the ends?"

Michael McInerney, a nationally ranked BMX competitor, said young people such as himself want a challenging course to call their own. "You'll catch twice as many people on the trails any day as at any Little League game," he said.

Mark McInerney, Michael's father and a BMX rider himself, said guidance is available on how to create a park. But he stated that in his view, "Springside Park is not the best site."

Speakers suggested several possible sites at Springside as well as a few off-the-beaten track, such as abandoned GE parking lots.

Parks commission chairman Cliff Nilan said he thinks the board is fully supportive of creating a BMX facility but must research the various site suggestions. Nilan said that the board will discuss the issue at a future meeting, with hopes of having a track set up next year.

he Pittsfield Gazette September 3, 1998

Ideas sought for Silver Lake plan

By Anthony Fyden

Creating an "oasis" at Silver Lake will take a unified public effort and a lot of cash, consultants said this past Tuesday.

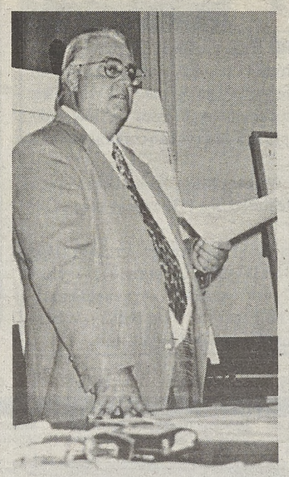
Representatives of Synergist Technolgy Group, Inc., a consultant team reviewing the lake's potential future, told residents that the best way to gain government funding for a project is to present a clear and realistic plan.

Paul Cacciamani, company president, said that while grant money is available for redevelopment of contaminated sites, the process is very competitive. "You're competing with every other site in the United States," he said.

The Synergist Group was hired by the city and funded with a $20,000 state grant. Its mission is to develop a workable plan for redevelopment of the badly polluted center city lake.

Cacciamani noted that an actual cleanup plan for the site, which is contaminated with PCBs and other chemicals from the nearby GE facility, will come under the purview of state and federal environmental agencies.

County treasurer Peter Arlos, chairman of the city commission which hired the consultants, said that public input is vital to the project. "This could be a great project," he said. "We've got 36 acres in the center of the city. With your help and your input, we could make it an oasis."



Consultant Paul Cacciamani of Synergist Technology Group is seeking public input in developing a revitalization plan for PCB-contaminated Silver Lake.

Arlos envisions a recreation area at the lake, with picnic sites, bicycling paths and walking paths. He suggests that Silver Lake Boulevard be closed "to increase frontage" at the site.

The park should also include a memorial to three men killed in a GE explosion that occurred at a plant building near the lake, Arlos said.

Cacciamani asked the approximately 25 audience members for perceptions of the lake's past as well as for their thoughts on its possible future uses.

Many among the audience viewed the lake as a "toxic dump."

But others said the lake, even in its current state, is a gem which draws an array of wildlife. "The sunsets are unbelievable," one man said.

Audience members also listed several potential uses for a revitalized lake, including recreation, fishing, boating and as a conservation area.

A representative of General Electric also attended the meeting.

The consultants said they would hold at least two more public meetings, probably in October and December. They would "coordinate efforts" set goals and draft a mission statement, laying out a potential future for the site.

Cacciamani urged the community to be focused but patient. "This is only the first step in a long journey," he said.

Panel sets skateboard rules

By D.R. Bahlman
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — The Park Commission last night gave preliminary endorsement to rules governing the use of a facility for skateboarders and in-line skaters in the Common park on First Street.

The 100-by-100-foot "skate park" is expected to be ready for use by mid-September, and members of the commission agreed that regulations should be in place when it opens.

Among the rules is one which restricts use of the skate park to users of skateboards and in-line skates.

That didn't sit well with representatives of a group of young people who ride BMX bicycles.

Seven riders of the compact bikes, which are designed for "moto-cross" racing and for riding over courses similar to those used by skateboarders and in-line skaters, attended the commission's meeting at Springside House to oppose their exclusion from the skate park.

They contended that both "skaters" and BMX riders can safely use the same facility.

9/18/98

SKATEBOARD, continued on B4

Skateboard

from B1

The two groups do "co-exist" in other Massachusetts cities that he surveyed, Robert S. Mellace, the city's director of community services, told the commission. Mellace noted, however, that at least one community — Attleboro — while not prohibiting BMX riders from its four skate parks, "doesn't encourage them, either."

Park Commission Chairman Clifford J. Nilan said that he opposes opening the skate park to BMX riders. The facility isn't large enough to safely accommodate both skaters and bikers, said Nilan. He also noted that when the skate park was being planned, neighbors of the facility were told that it would be for skaters — bicycle riding wasn't mentioned.

"It's like building a football field and all of a sudden having the golfers come in and say they want to use it to practice drives," said Park Commission member Robert J. Smith.

Smith, who joined the BMX rider-representatives, City Councilor Richard J. Scapin of Ward 5, and Anthony Stracuzzi, director of park maintenance, on a tour of Springside Park prior to the meeting, said that he would support the establishment of a separate facility for BMX riders. Scapin also pledged his support, observing that it wouldn't be entirely fair to the skaters who advocated for their own facility to now have to share it with another group.

The commission agreed that the merits of one possible BMX site, near the former zoo at Springside Park, would have to be discussed with the Friends of Springside and other groups involved with planning the park's future. The site was reconnoitered during the pre-meeting tour.

Also last night, the commission endorsed a proposal that the posted rules include a statement that the wearing of helmets and other protective equipment while using the skate park is "strongly encouraged."

The commission deferred final approval of the rules until a jurisdictional matter involving the City Council is settled. The council has approved a petition which would require the wearing of helmets in the skate park. However, it is not clear which rule would take precedence, since local law gives the Park Commission authority to establish regulations in the city's parks.

9/18/98

Dorothy Amos Park closing for months for PCB removal

By Theo Stein
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — Dorothy Amos Park on West Street will be closed for up to three months starting this week to allow GE contractors to remove chemically tainted soil and to install new playground equipment.

Department of Community Services director Robert S. Mellace said that the park will be closed at the commencement of preparatory work on Tuesday or Wednesday. He said work will continue for two to three months, meaning that the small park will be closed for most of the summer.

Meanwhile, GE is planning to excavate drums, capacitors and other debris from alongside Unkamet Brook where the stream cuts through the company's old interior

5/24/98

PARK, continued on B8

Up-to-date parks

9/24/98

The pending completion this week of two new park facilities — one a skating rink, the other a skateboarding course — provides great news.

Coupled with the beautiful job done by General Electric at the Amos Park on West Street and the new women's softball complex, the new facilities represent the first major upgrade to the park system in years.

Credit is due to those who pushed for the latest improvements, especially ward 2 city councilor Tim DiSilva.

Aside from the sheer excitement of seeing the city install something new, it's notable that the revised park facilities address non-traditional recreational needs. For a long time, Pittsfield has focused its limited park resources exclusively on conventional team sports.

While it's still appropriate to promote baseball, football and — the recent rising star — soccer, recreational tastes have changed. Skateboarding and in-line skating have proven extremely popular even though participants have lacked park space for their specialties.

The parks department and the parks commission seem committed to better matching facilities to recreational interests. It's hard to tell which activities will be passing fads and which are here for the long haul, but it's commendable to try to align recreational resources to current interests.

Park

from B1

5/24/98

landfill on the GE Plastics property.

The debris, which includes at least three drums, is sticking out of the bank near the stream's water line. Some of the material is in the water, so GE is moving ahead with plans for an immediate removal.

Anna Symington, the acting section chief for the Department of Environmental Protection's Pittsfield cleanup efforts, said that GE is proposing to dismantle two beaver dams on the brook to lower water levels prior to excavation.

The landfill, which was used from the 1920s to the 1950s, measures approximately 100 by 600 feet and received much of the soil excavated during the construction of the OP- 1 and OP-2 buildings. The landfill also received phenolic wastes and process wastes from GE.

GE is not intending to test or remove anything else that might be uncovered during the work because the area is being administered under the RCRA corrective action permit. But Symington said Wednesday that the DEP had not agreed to that element of the GE proposal.

In related news, the number of properties to test positive for PCBs keeps inching toward 100 as ongoing sampling continues to turn up new sites. At last tally, 95 properties had shown sample results greater than 2 parts per million. That number included the three city schools — Allendale, Pittsfield High and Hibbard Alternative.

GE contractors were polishing off a cleanup at one of the "core" properties at 68 Brombach St. GE spokesman Bruce Bunch said 700 truckloads of soil were removed this past week. "We're pleased with the pace of work, and obviously the good weather everyone enjoyed helped quite a bit," he said.

Symington said property at 325 Benedict Road and one affected neighbor are next on the list.

She noted that all 92 residential lots may not require a cleanup. Surface soil contamination must average greater than 2 ppm to trigger state cleanup laws, she noted.

GE was asked recently by the DEP to test 15 more properties, she added. And the EPA is awaiting test results on 16 properties that agency contractors tested last week.



Park Commissioner Robert Smith, GE's Jane Magee, Commissioners Anthony Massimiano and Clifford Nilan, and Mayor Gerald Doyle unveil a completely renovated Dorothy Amos Park, a GE gift to Pittsfield.

10/26/98.

The Pittsfield Gazette December 3, 1998

Parks board rejects Nativity request but debate isn't over

By Anthony Fyden

Jon Papa's figurines of Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus will not rest at Park Square on Christmas Eve, park commissioners ruled on Monday.

Papa, a Partridge Road resident, termed the ruling "censorship" and vowed to continue his quest.

In a 2-2 vote, the board rejected a petition from Papa to set up a 3 foot by 5 foot Nativity scene on Park Square — a public park — on December 24 and remove it the following day.

"I'm not trying to offend anyone," Papa said. "I'm not trying to set a precedent here. The precedent has already been set."

Split vote

Board chairman Cliff Nilan and member Robert Smith supported Papa's bid but Sue Colker and Anthony Massimiano voted no, creating the tie, which by rule rejects the petition.

A fifth member, Ben Kaplan, was absent but sent a letter to Nilan indicating his objection to the petition.

Papa first petitioned the board in September and the matter was sent to the city solicitor for review. A memo from the solicitor's office indicates that while the board cannot reject a park event or display for content, it can regulate terms, such as placement, time and manner.

Before Monday's vote, the commission heard opinions from religious leaders and a city councilor .

Support from councilor

"The symbolism that Mr. Papa is expressing is the symbolism of a family, a mother, father and a child." said ward 6 councilor Jim Massery. "[It is] a symbolism of hope, purity and love. I feel that the symbolism of Mary, Joseph and Jesus is much too pure to make a controversy of."

Massery believes that Papa's request does not violate separation of church & state concerns since as a private citizen, Papa, would be erecting and maintaining the religious display.

For many years, the city had allowed The Knights of Columbus to set up a creche on Park Square, but the tradition ceased about ten years ago when the creche was moved to the lawn at St. Stephen's church.

Religious leaders

Reverend Robert Kyte, president of the Pittsfield regional council of churches, encouraged Papa to abandon his plans and join the St. Stephen's display, which is now sponsored by the council of churches.



Papa: petitioner objects to religious "censorship."

"From our point of view it is a happier situation to have it [at St. Stephen's]," Kyte said, personally addressing Papa. "As one Christian to another we would very much welcome your participation with us to welcome the holiday to the community."

Rabbi Dennis Ross of Temple Anshe Amunim also voiced objections to Papa's proposal. "I feel that a creche is not an appropriate addition to Park Square or any park," he said.

Ross added that the St. Stephen's display represents an "ideal solution" and demonstrates the region's spirit of cooperation.

No reason to deny

Smith said that he saw no grounds for refusing Papa's request. "I really don't know why you're doing it other than you feel very strongly about it and you feel that it's your right," he told Papa. "If you feel it's a freedom of speech and the city solicitor agrees that it's a freedom of speech, we should let you do it. The parks are for everybody."

Board chairman Cliff Nilan said that while the display might "offend" some people, he did not believe the board had grounds to reject the plan.

"I think [Papa] has a right to do this," Nilan said. "I think he's being very fair about this. I just hate to offend anyone, ever, but especially at this time [of year]. The unfortunate thing is, I think this will offend some people."

Massimiano said he objected not to the content of the proposed display, but to the length of time it would be at Park Square.

"I don't think we've ever allowed a private person to set up an exhibit and leave it for a period of time that I am aware of," he said.

Wrong place

Colker said she "thought long and hard" during the weeks preceding the hearing before making up her mind.

"I'm voting my conscience and I vote no," she said. "I don't think Park Square is the place for it. I would be equally opposed to any other religious demonstration in the park."

Papa said little during the meeting, but seemed frustrated following the vote, calling it "censorship" of his religious expression.

He and Massery spoke outside of the meeting room and Papa decided to return to the board and request a one-day display, which would seem to at least address Massimiano's main objection.

Nilan refused to reopen the debate, but said that the issue could be brought up at a later date.

Papa had wanted to set up a display last year, but was told he initiated his request too late in the season.

He submitted his petition early this year, in hopes of allowing ample consideration.

Letters to the Editor

Church, state are bad mix

To the Editor of THE EAGLE:—

I take issue with several points Dan Valenti makes in his tirade "Crecheless and foolish" Dec. 6.

First, a minor historical point: I have several $5 bills in my possession which do not say "In God We Trust"; that motto was added during the 1950s. More importantly, he writes of the "constitutional rights" of someone to erect a display on public property to express religious sentiments. In ruling against a creche display in Pawtucket Rhode Island, the Supreme Court has already established that no such "constitutional right" exists.

The problem is not in the sentiments displayed; obviously our community's religious leaders such as Rev.'s Kyte and Povey, and Rabbi Ross have thought about this more deeply and more maturely than has Mr. Valenti. I seriously doubt that any of these men qualify as part of the "microscopic minority of cheerless souls who take personal offense" at the display. More likely, they are well aware of the historical damage done to our freedoms, our government, and our religious institutions whenever the church and state become entangled. All three are either weakened or debased in the process.

The Inquisition and the Salem witch trials among many other tragedies of like nature would never have occurred without this deadly combination of church and government. Freedoms were lost (and lives ended prematurely), government became an agent of the church, and the churches committed atrocities in the name of God that make us shudder today if we take the effort to study them.

I object to the placement of the creche, though I do not hate Christmas, and have celebrated it with my family for over 40 years. Though I am not a Christian and do not accept the Christian theology of sin and redemption, this does not mean that I do not agree with at least some of the more noble sentiments put forth by people who do believe. This gets to the heart of the matter.

For me, Christmas is a secular holiday, for others it is deeply religious. However, our Constitution forbids either the endorsement or interference by the government in the religious aspects of the holiday. A creche on public property gives the appearance that the government endorses a religion.

Mr. Papa, however, is free to exercise his constitutional rights in the following ways: First, he may erect the creche on private property, and expect that this property right will be respected by everyone (or the consequences of the law be suffered should they harm the display) whether they are offended or not. Second, he may hand out pictures, writings, or any other privately funded material, or speak from a soap box if he wishes, all about Christmas or Easter or whatever is in his heart, because in doing so, no reasonable passerby would mistake these messages coming from him as originating from, being funded by, or endorsed by the government.

This is the constitutional right which must not be violated: freedom of conscience, without government sponsorship or endorsement in matters of religion.

RUSS ELLSWORTH
Windsor, Dec. 6, 1998

The Eagle does not run thank you letters or letters of appreciation. Letter writers are limited to one letter per 30-day period. Letters to the editor must include the writer's name, address and telephone number. If typing, please double-space. Handwritten letters are discouraged. All letters are subject to editing.

12/8/98

State must not impose religion

To the Editor of THE EAGLE:—

Having lived in the state of Rhode Island during the creche controversy of several years ago, it is with reluctance that I enter into the dialogue surrounding this issue here in Pittsfield.

From the recent column by Dan Valenti, it is obvious to those of us who know the religious leaders Mr. Valenti tried to sully with his comments, that his remarks were a gross distortion of their pronouncements. Having known the Rev. Robert Kyte for several years, and having been party to many discussions in the Pittsfield Area Council of Churches (PACC) regarding the creche, I have never heard him or any other religious leader in this city speak of any religious symbols as being unfit.

I am certain that Pastor Kyte never made the comments attributed to him in Mr. Valenti's article. In fact, it has been the intention of Pastor Kyte and the PACC to treat all of the religious symbols present in Pittsfield and the surrounding communities with respect and dignity. Mr. Valenti should have checked his facts before he made his ill-advised foray into tabloid journalism.

Shame on The Berkshire Eagle editorial staff as well, for publishing such a column without ever checking the accuracy of the attributions Mr. Valenti made. It is regrettable that you allowed one of your columnists to take such an unethical approach. Other journalists in this state have been dismissed for such outrageous conduct.

Not surprisingly, your columnist ignored the deeper issues surrounding the placement of religious symbols on public property. Too many times throughout the history of Christianity our most treasured symbols have been misappropriated by the state for the benefit of the regime. One only need look at the twisted and grotesque cross used by the Nazis as the chief symbol of their flag to have a deep distaste for such misappropriation of religious symbols. Of course, I am equally dismayed when commercial interests appropriate these symbols for the purpose of profit without every considering issues of ethics and justice.

Contrary to many secular beliefs, for Christians the creche represents one of the core beliefs of our faith. It is hardly appropriate that one of the treasured symbols of this faith, a symbol of reconciliation and peace, should be imposed or anyone through the use of publicly-owned means. The history of the ancient church is replete with martyrs who refused to accept the religious symbols imposed upon by them by pagan Rome. With our own sad history of forced baptisms, conversions and confessions we as Christians are not concerned about being politically correct, but being just, and we are very concerned whenever our symbols are misused or imposed.

Further, being an advocate of First Amendment rights, I believe we must be mindful of our history as a nation to understand the beauty of the Bill of Rights of the Constitution. Despite the guarantees provided by the First Amendment, various religious groups have had to face down government interference in the way they have chosen to live out their faith. Government persecution of the Mormons and Amish as well as Jehovah Witnesses is part of our nation's history.

The people in these groups are not cheerless souls as Mr. Valenti contends, but have had to wage tremendous social and legal battles to obtain the same rights as other Americans to be free of state interference in their religious practices. As a Christian, I am quick to realize that protecting this right for all religious groups safeguards the right for the practice of my faith as well. It is worth noting that theocracy has already failed in New England largely because of the realization that the combined power of church and state can be particularly oppressive. The framers of the Constitution, recognizing this fact, were wise to provide for what has become known as the separation clause.

REV. PETER D. BOEHRINGER
Pittsfield, Dec. 9, 1998

The author is reverend of Zion's Evangelical Lutheran Church.

12/18/98

10/16/98

The $150,000 renovation, including construction of a third basketball court, was a gift to the city from GE.

West St. park reopens after PCB cleanup

By Theo Stein
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — City officials and General Electric representatives celebrated the reopening of a completely renovated Dorothy Amos Park yesterday in a small ceremony off West Street.

The closing of the small, heavily used park last August after PCBs were found in the soil near playground equipment crystallized public concern about PCB contamination.

The reopening of the park, coming on the heels of the settlement announcement and the unveiling Wednesday of a brownfields plan for the GE plant, is a harbingers of a brighter future for Pittsfield, Mayor Gerald S. Doyle Jr. said.

"This is another example of what good things can happen when agencies, corporations and government officials come together," he said.



Ben Garver

J. Lyn Cutler
'A great day'

The $150,000 renovation, a gift to the city from GE, included the resurfacing of two basketball courts, the construction of a third and the complete replacement of the park's worn playground equipment and benches.

The restoration came after crews from Maxymillian Technologies Inc. excavated 7,500 tons of contaminated soil from the former Perlman scrapyard that the city acquired as a gift in 1975.

"Just 14 months ago, this park was closed on a very dreary, rainy day," said Jane Magee, the manager of GE's Pittsfield environmental programs. "It became a symbol of a lot that was going on in Pittsfield."

"We've come a long way since that rainy day," she added.

On hand for the ceremony yesterday were Franklin Reid of Texas and the Rev. Fanny Cooper of John Street, two relatives of Dorothy Reid Amos, the founder of the Early Childhood Development Center and the park's namesake.

Also in attendance was J. Lyn Cutler, section chief for the Department of Environmental Protection, the official who closed the park down last Aug. 13 when PCB contamination was discovered in the soil beneath some playground equipment.

"This is a great day," said Cutler. "But I wish I had a basketball to shoot around. That just seems so appropriate."

PARK, continued on A5

The Berkshire Eagle, Friday, October 16, 1998 — A5

Park from A1

Ward 6 City Councilor James Massery said he remembered the sense of excitement in the neighborhood when the park opened 20 years ago, "when I was a budding basketball celebrity — in my own mind, of course."

"This is a showpiece," Massery said. "I think that Pittsfield is going to have a lot of these showpieces when all is said and done."

Massery said he was especially pleased about the addition of the third court.

"It used to be that you didn't have a whole lot of room to teach your kids," he said. "I've been down here with my son six times already."

James H. Maxymillian said the park restoration was a satisfying project to be involved with. "This park is the most heavily used in the city," he said. "I feel good about working on this type of job."

Other firms involved in the park project were White Engineering of Pittsfield, Hill Engineering of Dalton, Blasland Bouck & Lee of Syracuse, N.Y., Berkshire Environmental Consultants Inc. of Pittsfield, and C.L. Frank Landscaping of Northampton.

In addition to the added basketball court, the park renovation makes better use of the narrow space, said John Novotny, remedial project engineer.

"Before the back was overgrown and not really accessible," he said, standing next to a cluster of ginkgos that will shade a new grouping of benches.

Novotny paused to look over the newly "bioengineered" riverbank with Cutler and Anna Symington, who has hands-on oversight of residential remediation projects for the DEP.

"It's been a topsy-turvy year," he observed with a shake of the head.

"Lightning speed, those are the words that come to my mind," said Symington.

"I've worked for the department for 17 years," she added. "And I've never seen anything like this."

Since April, Maxymillian crews under contract to GE have completed or are in the process of completing cleanups at 52 contaminated residential properties in Pittsfield. Work on eight more properties is planned to start next week. And Symington hopes that an additional four or five might be completed by season's end.

That would bring the total number of properties cleaned up to 64 or 65, a few more than the 62 properties that GE had expected to complete this year.

But there will be more work next year. So far 165 residential properties have been sampled, and 109 have tested positive for PCBs over the state's 2 parts per million safety standard. Fifty-four of those had samples that exceeded the 10 ppm immediate action threshold. GE recently completed pre-sampling interviews for another 25 properties and testing plans for those parcels that show a clear link to the GE facility will be submitted to the DEP soon.

JUNE SPRIGG TOOLEY

No governmental religion

Jon Papa wants to put a Nativity scene on Park Square. I believe that Jon Papa doesn't understand how freedom of religion works hand in hand with freedom of speech. Thanks to the Bill of Rights, he is free to believe in any religion and free to decorate his home with any religious symbols he chooses. But thanks also to the Bill of Rights, which guarantees separation of church and state, he is not free to put his religious symbols on public land.

I love Nativity scenes and have them all over my home at Christmas. But I believe that it is very important to keep church and state separate. I teach history at BCC and the benefits of freedom of religion, and the dangers of state-supported religion, are very clear to me (and my students.)

12/3/98

The Pittsfield Gazette December 3, 1998

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OPINIONS



Good decision on creche

The Pittsfield Park Commission has prudently denied an application from a city resident, Jon Papa, to place a creche at Park Square, an issue that was resolved a decade ago when the Knights of Columbus moved its nativity scene to the lawn of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church across from the square. This compromise, agreeable to both the Knights of Columbus and the Pittsfield Area Council of Churches, has stood the test of time. Park Square is not the appropriate location for a symbol of one particular religion to be displayed beyond the one-day limit the commission has required of other exhibits and demonstrations. In short, Christianity is not the official religion of Pittsfield. Mr. Papa should accept the invitation of the Council of Churches to add his exhibit to theirs.

12/3/98

Vile Valenti column harms good people

To the Editor of THE EAGLE:—

I am disgusted by Dan Valenti's vilifying of Pittsfield Park commissioners and several area clergy in his ill-spirited, caustic column about a proposed creche for Park Square ("City Limits," Sunday, December 6). I'm equally disappointed in The Eagle for printing this attack upon respected community leaders whose integrity and sensitivity serve the greater Pittsfield area well.

Mr. Valenti's article serves only to release a lot of bile. It's the kind of explosive writing that a person might do when first infuriated, but then would have the sense to tear up and throw away. That he failed to do so is a shame. With this kind of journalism, he has out-grinched the Grinch that stole Christmas.

By the way, Mr. Valenti, the Holocaust memorial near the courthouse is not a Jewish remembrance only. The enormous evil that claimed millions of innocent Jewish lives (and Gypsies, and homosexual people, and many other categories of people deemed unacceptable) morally entangled the entire human race, and it is for all of us to keep remembering that our daily choices of how we treat people have enormous consequence.

I believe that Mr. Valenti owes a public apology to the commissioners and the clergy whom he named in his article. So does The Eagle, for the injustice done by publishing this piece.

REV. PETER ELVIN
Williamstown, Dec. 6, 1998

12/9/98

Creche petition denied

Board opposes its placement at Park Square

By D.R. Bahlman
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — A Pittsfield man's request for permission to erect a Nativity scene at Park Square was denied last night by the Park Commission.

Jon Papa's petition to place a 3-by-5-foot creche in the park from Christmas Eve until the day after Christmas was rejected on a vote of 2-2.

Park Commissioner Ben J. Kaplan did not attend the meeting, and the commission's chairman, Clifford J. Nilan, denied Kaplan's written request to cast a vote by proxy. In his letter, Kaplan stated his opposition to Papa's petition and asked that his "no" vote be recorded.

"I'm not in favor of having any physical structures, regardless of subject matter, erected in any of our city parks, allowed to stand beyond a one-day celebration," Kaplan wrote. "... If the applicant wishes to erect his creche for a one-day celebration, I'd be receptive to accepting the petition and voting in favor of it."

'This isn't over'

"This isn't over," Papa said after the meeting. He added that he plans to contact the American Center for Law and Justice, an organization that advocates religious freedom, before deciding on his next move.

Park Commissioner Robert J. Smith joined Nilan in voting in favor of granting Papa's request to place his figurines of Mary, Joseph and the Infant Jesus at Park Square; commission members Anthony G. Massimiano and Susan P. Colker cast negative votes.

"I don't think we've ever allowed a private person to erect an exhibit in a park overnight without supervision," Massimiano said.

Colker said she believes that the display "might offend some people." She added that she would oppose the use of city parks for any type of "demonstration."

Observing that "it would be easier to say 'no' if we had a policy" concerning unattended displays, Nilan said that Papa nonetheless "has a right to do this. ... The unfortunate thing is that it will offend some people."

Nilan added, however, that he would not have supported the petition had it sought placement of the Nativity scene in the park for an extended period of time.

Freedom of speech

Smith agreed. Indeed, he said he had reservations about allowing the creche to remain in the park for more than two days for fear of setting a bad precedent.

"I don't know why you're doing this. ... I don't think it's necessary, but if you feel it's a question of freedom of speech, then I think we have to let you do it," Smith told Papa.

12/11/98 CRECHE, continued on B4

■ Creche from B1

"I don't wake up one morning ... and decide to make this commission's life miserable," Papa replied. He said that he sought permission to erect the Nativity scene "to replace something that was taken away that shouldn't have been taken away."

Papa was referring to a creche belonging to the Knights of Columbus that stood in Park Square at Christmas for many years until about a decade ago when, by agreement with the Park Commission, it was moved to the lawn of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, which is situated on Park Square.

The Knights of Columbus, according to a letter to the commission from the Rev. Robert R. Kyte, senior pastor of the First United Church of Christ, Congregational, in Dalton and president of the Pittsfield Area Council of Churches, had asked the council to "take leadership over the [Nativity] project."

The council of churches, Kyte said last night, "has no opinion" on Papa's petition. However, placing a creche on the lawn of a church, said Kyte, "is better and more appropriate" than placing it in a park because the display serves to connect the story of the Nativity to the Christian faith.

Kyte invited Papa to participate in a ceremony at St. Stephen's on Christmas Eve to place the figure of the Christ Child in the creche.

Rabbi Dennis Ross of Temple Anshe Amunim in Pittsfield told the commission last night that he agrees with the council of churches' position on the question of where a creche should be situated. A Nativity scene, said Ross, "is not an appropriate addition to Park Square or any other park."

Pittsfield City Councilor James J. Massery, who attended last night's meeting to support Papa's petition, said that he has fond memories of being taken by his parents to visit the Park Square creche, which he said was symbolic of familial love.

"The symbol is much too pure to make a controversy of," Massery said.

Solicitor's ruling

According to a memorandum to the commission from City Solicitor Kathleen Alexander, a private citizen's right to display a creche on public property is well-settled.

Such a display, Alexander wrote, does not violate the constitutional doctrine of separation of church and state because the so-called "establishment clause" of the Constitution "applies only to the words and acts of government, and was never meant to be an impediment to purely private religious speech which is connected to the government only by virtue of its occurrence on public property," particularly parks, which are established public forums.

However, Alexander wrote, the government may "regulate the exercise of protected speech with content-neutral time, place and/or manner restrictions."

As long as they are reasonable, such restrictions may include regulation of the time and location of expressions of religious faith or belief, the solicitor wrote.



Jared Leeds / Berkshire Eagle Sta

The Rev. A. Michael Povey, a panelist, discusses the creche issue during a forum at First Church of Christ last night.

■ Creche from A1

Christian churches in the 1930s which used the Nazi flag as their altar cloths. There the church, weak because it was a state church, became an agent of Nazi propaganda.

"With this in mind, we in America are rightly concerned when there is the slightest whiff of governmental control of our religious institutions," Povey continued. "We are particularly concerned about our holy symbols for two reasons: first, because they are ours. They belong to us and not to the state. Second, because when the government uses them, it inevitably gets them wrong."

Povey and the other panelists, the Rev. Robert R. Kyte, president of the council of churches and pastor of First Congregational Church in Dalton, and the Rev. Richard L. Floyd, pastor of First Church, took pains to point out that neither they nor the council of churches oppose — or find offensive — the placement of a creche in Park Square by Jon A. Papa of Pittsfield.

Earlier this week, the city's Park Commission gave Papa permission to display his Nativity scene in the park from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Christmas Day. Among the conditions by which Papa agreed to abide was that he place a sign on the creche stating that it is his personal expression of faith and that the city in no way sanctions it.

Povey said that he applauds Papa's exercise of his constitutional right to "witness" for his faith.

The council of churches and Papa, said Kyte, have "an honest difference of opinion" concerning where a Nativity scene should be displayed.

Some 10 years ago, the Knights of Columbus agreed to turn over sponsorship of the creche — which had been situated in Park Square every Christmas for the preceding 50 years or so — to the council of churches, Floyd recalled last night.

That mutually agreed-upon decision was prompted largely by a Supreme Court ruling concerning the placement of religious displays on public property, and Floyd said that during the creche's last year on Park Square, the ruling was interpreted such that the Nativity could be "inoculated" against legal challenges if other holiday decorations were displayed with it.

So, said Povey, the Knights of Columbus, "with great reluctance," attached an illuminated Santa Claus and sleigh to one of the beams in the Nativity scene.

"The symbol of the creche belongs to the church," he said. "It is not a symbol of nice, warm fuzzy feelings. It is not a symbol of the Christmas spirit — whatever that might be. It is a symbol of a particular Christian belief, that Jesus is God incarnate. So we kneel at our creches, we pray before our creches, they are for us objects of Christian devotion; they are not handy seasonal decorations. When a government body sets up a creche on public land, we want to cry out, 'Hands off, stop using our holy symbol to decorate your downtown areas.' We become even more aggrieved when local governments surround our creches with Santas, reindeer and the like. Our protest is: 'You're misusing our religious symbols.' "

12/18/98

Panel of clergymen presents case for keeping creches off public land

By D.R. Bahlman
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — A Nativity scene should not be placed on public property, a Pittsfield clergyman said last night, because it creates the impression that the government endorses one religion over another.

That "whiff" of governmental control, said the Rev. A. Michael Povey, should rankle every citizen, regardless of religious persuasion or lack of it.

Povey, who is rector of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, was one of three clergymen who participated in a panel discussion of the subject "Why Our Creche is on a Church Lawn."

About 35 people attended the event, which was sponsored by the Pittsfield Area Council of Churches and held at First Church of Christ, Congregational, at Park Square.

"Imagine living in a country in which the only form of Christian worship which the government sanctioned was that of the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England," said Povey. "That is what happened in England in 1662 and 3,000 ministers were forced out of their churches because they refused to conform. ... Imagine living in a country in which if you are not a member of the Church of England, you cannot attend Oxford or Cambridge universities, nor could you be elected as a member of Parliament. Such was the case in England until the 19th century. And it is still the case in the United Kingdom that the monarch must be a Protestant and a member of the Church of England. Poor Prince Charles may be a secret Buddhist, but if he is to attain to the throne, he must profess to be an Anglican."

In Norway, said Povey, the law says that the church must make women bishops. In Germany, public tax money supports the church.

"And who can forget those images of so-called German

CRECHE, continued on A7

12/18/98

Park commission sets Nativity vote

By Anthony Fyden

Jon Papa wants to set up a Christmas Nativity scene. Nothing controversial about that.

But he wants to place his figurines of Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus on Park Square. That's city-owned property and raises some serious questions.

Papa, who lives on Partridge Road, says that he's simply trying to express his religious faith. "It's not a political statement; I'm not doing this for attention," Papa said. "Christmas is not about Santa Claus, it's not about reindeer. It's about the birth of Christ."

Papa earlier this fall petitioned the city's park commission to allow a Nativity display during the Christmas season. The commission sought advice from the city solicitor's office, which recently offered its opinion in a letter to board members.

The board meets at 7 p.m. on Monday at the Springside House to formally consider the request.

According to park commissioner Ben Kaplan, the commission cannot legally "disallow anything based on content." It can, however, regulate the size, structure and length of time for park displays or events.

Kaplan believes the proposed Nativity scene is inappropriate for Park Square. "I'm going to vote no because I'm not in favor of having a structure stand beyond a one-day event," he said.

The former city councilor added that he does not have a problem with a religious meeting or event in a city park. He noted that some churches, including the Zions Lutheran Church on First Street, hold annual "family day" events in city parks.

Parks commissioner Sue Colker agreed. "I don't think [Park Square] is the appropriate place," she said. "I think it sets a precedent that anybody can put anything up on Park Square."

It's not surprising that officials would step lightly around the subject of religious displays on city property. Just a few years ago, objections to

11/26/98

See RULING page 7

Ruling on request for Nativity scene expected

continued from page 1

11/26/98

Christmas decorations at the city's post office sparked an emotional debate.

The debate embroiled city officials and religious leaders and left bruises that church groups and others had hoped were behind them. As Colker put it, "I thought we had this discussion."

Reverend Joel Huntington, a leader of the area council of churches, said he recently spoke with Papa and suggested he participate in the annual decorating of the creche that is set up in front of St. Stephen's church on East Street, just across from Park Square. The St. Stephen's display actually was designated as a Park Square alternative following a similar controversy years ago.

"In terms of being a good neighbor, I think that having it at St. Stephen's makes more sense," Huntington said.

If the intent is to share the holiday, Huntington added, it might be unwise to "place baby Jesus in the middle of a political storm."

Huntington said that Papa's quest was not officially discussed by the council. The goal during the holiday season, he said, is to celebrate all faiths and "to be a good neighbor to the community."

A Nativity display on Park Square could alienate some people by wrongly suggesting "that everyone is a Christian — because not everybody is," he said.

Papa said his display would encompass about 5 feet by 3 feet. It would include only the holy family. He would be willing to place the display anywhere on Park Square, he said.

The Nativity, he added, would be displayed only from the morning of December 24 through Christmas day, and then would be removed.

Papa said that he sought advice from the American Center for Law & Justice — an organization that advocates religious freedom — before making his request. He's confident that he has the legal right to place his Nativity in the public park.

He notes that property is regularly used for political rallies — Mayor Gerald Doyle, Jr. announced his intention to run for mayor on Park Square. The right to display religious faith is a matter of free speech, he said. "It's going to create controversy but that's the beauty of it," Papa said. "That's what makes this country great."

Papa noted that Park Square is home to a veterans' memorial. "Everybody that fought overseas, they fought for democracy," he said. If freedom of speech is curtailed, "they died in vain."

Papa was heartened by the city solicitor's opinion and believes that the park commission will approve his plan. "My personal feeling is I don't see how they can say no to me."

Too often, he said, citizens are willing to allow government to step on basic rights. "It's a matter of principal," he said. "Little by little, our freedoms are being taken away."

Ward 6 city councilor Jim Massery favors allowing the display and all types of public discourse at city parks. "I support that idea," he said. "That's what's called tolerance. The worst kind of intolerance is to say that someone can't make a public display of faith."

Papa said he has received support from other citizens since his quest was reported in the September 17 Gazette. "There's a silent majority behind me," he said. "I'm ready to stand my ground."

Creche plea denied

PITTSFIELD — A Pittsfield man's request for permission to erect a Nativity scene at Park Square was denied last night by the Park Commission.

Jon Papa's petition to place a 3-by-5-foot creche in the park from Christmas Eve until the day after Christmas was rejected on a vote of 2-2.

Papa said after the meeting that he plans to contact the American Center for Law and Justice, an organization which advocates religious freedom, before deciding on his next move.

Park Commissioner Robert J. Smith joined Nilan in voting in favor of granting Papa's request to place his figurines of Mary, Joseph and the infant Jesus at Park Square; commission members Anthony G. Massimiano and Susan P. Colker cast negative votes.

12/6/98

Dearth of snow speeds up Burbank Park construction

By D.R. Bahlman
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — December's balmy beginning may have had skiers ready to bust their bindings in frustration, but it's a been a boon for the building trades.

Among the beneficiaries of the almost snowless season are Pittsfield's parks, notably Burbank Park, where work on a new road and two parking lots is virtually completed.

"The weather has allowed the contractor [D.R. Billings Inc. of Lanesboro] to continue work and accomplish a lot more than what we thought we'd have done by now," Robert S. Mellace, Pittsfield's director of community services, said this week. "... Last year, when the girls' softball complex was under construction, we had to stop in mid-November because of snowfall."

Mellace estimated that the work at the park, which is situated on Onota Lake, is about 60 percent finished.

Besides repaving the road and parking lots, the $900,000 improvement project includes extension of the boat ramp, improvement of the handicapped accessibility of the fishing pier, reconstruction of the beach near the bathhouse, and construction of a walkway along the lakefront connecting the north and south parking lots.

"We're hoping to have it all done by the summer of 1999," Mellace said.

Another project, reconstruction of the high school baseball field at Clapp Park, also has benefited from mild

12/18/98

PARK, continued on B4

Park from B1

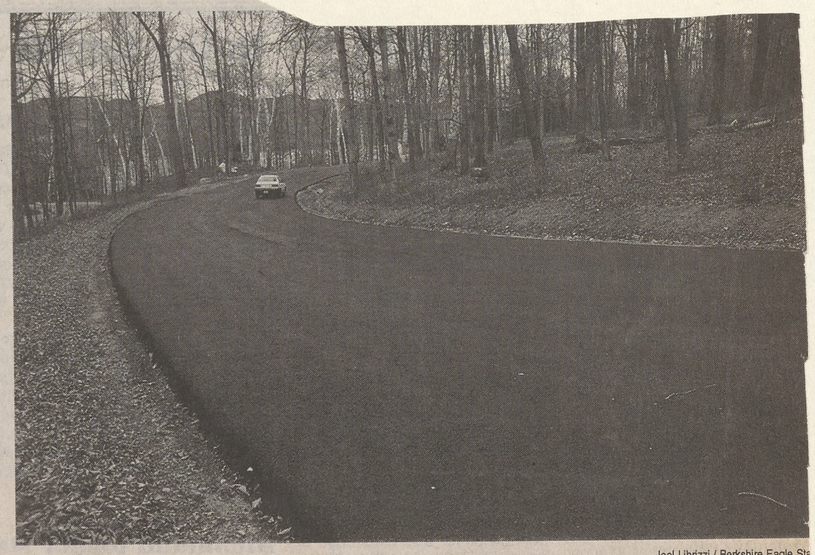
weather, Mellace said.

New fencing and players' benches will be installed at Clapp in the spring, when the new field will be "touched up and rolled."

At Springside Park, several projects are under way, including improvements to tulip beds and the expansion of the park's array of perennial gardens, Mellace said.

Cutting and marking of cross country ski trails by AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) is in progress, and officials are exploring the possibility of reclaiming the pond for recreational use.

Water service and heat has been restored to the warming hut off Springside Avenue, Mellace said, but it's uncertain if the building will reopen this year because it requires additional renovation.



Joel Librizzi / Berkshire Eagle Sta

A recently paved road leads to two new parking lots at Burbank Park on Onota Lake.

Pittsfield, Massachusetts, Tuesday, December 15, 1998

Creche allowed at Park Square for Christmas Day

By D.R. Bahlman
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — Jon A. Papa may place his Nativity scene in Park Square.

By a vote of three in favor, one opposed and one abstention, the five-member Park Commission last night reversed its Nov. 30 decision denying Papa permission to erect the 3-by-5-foot creche in what is arguably Pittsfield's most visible public place.

Following a brief debate over two amendments, the board decided to issue a permit for the Nativity, but it attached several conditions. Papa may set up the creche anytime after 6 a.m. on Christmas Day, but must remove it from the park no later than 5 p.m. on Christmas.

In addition, he must check on the creche periodically during the day. He also must place a sign on the Nativity indicating that it represents an expression of his personal beliefs and is in no way sanctioned by the city. The sign will be provided by city officials.

Liability release

Finally, he must sign a release exempting the city from any liability for damages to the Nativity scene.

Papa, who told the board last night that he wanted permission to keep the creche in place from midnight on Christmas Eve to midnight on Christmas Day, agreed to abide by the conditions.

"I wish I could have had it there longer, but they did vote on the time, place and manner [of the display]," Papa said. "It's reasonable. I'm a reasonable guy."

Park Commission Chairman Clifford J. Nilan joined board members Anthony G. Massimiano and Robert J. Smith in voting in favor of granting the permit, the conditions on which were attached by an amendment offered by Massimiano.

Commission member Ben J. Kaplan cast the lone "no" vote; Sue Colker abstained.

Following the vote, Kaplan offered an amendment to allow Papa to erect the Nativity in the Common park on First Street. The amendment was defeated 3-1 with Colker abstaining.

Observing that there has been ample opportunity for public comment on the issue, Nilan declined to allow members of the small audience to address the commission.

That didn't sit well with Charles Cianfarini of Pittsfield, who contended that the board's decision will open the city's public spaces to all manner of expressions of personal opinions.

"You'll have 'Impeach Clinton' signs in Park Square," Cianfarini

CRECHE, continued on A

Pittsfield, Massachusetts, Sunday, December 13, 1998

Nativity, with lawyers

Pittsfield man is insistent on Park Square creche

By Ellen G. Lahr
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — Jon A. Papa will return to the Parks Commission tomorrow night with a fresh request to place his Nativity scene in Park Square — and this time he has some legal muscle behind him.

Papa, whose initial request for a two-day display was rejected in a split vote at a Nov. 30 board meeting, has sought legal help from the American Center for Law and Justice, an organization funded by Pat Robertson, a leader of the country's conservative Christian movement.

The coalition has sent a demand letter to the city, citing federal case law that supports a private individual's right to place a Nativity scene in a public park. The letter promises a lawsuit in federal court if Papa is denied the right to display the Nativity scene.

Parks Commission Chairman Clifford J. Nilan, who supported Papa's original request, said the letter will probably have little impact on the board's decision.

"I don't think [the threat of a lawsuit] will play a role in anyone's vote," said Nilan. "It didn't make a difference before the first vote, and it won't make a difference at the second vote."

Nilan reiterated his own position on the matter.

"I think he has the right to do it," he said. "What upsets me is that this has become a huge hornet's nest."

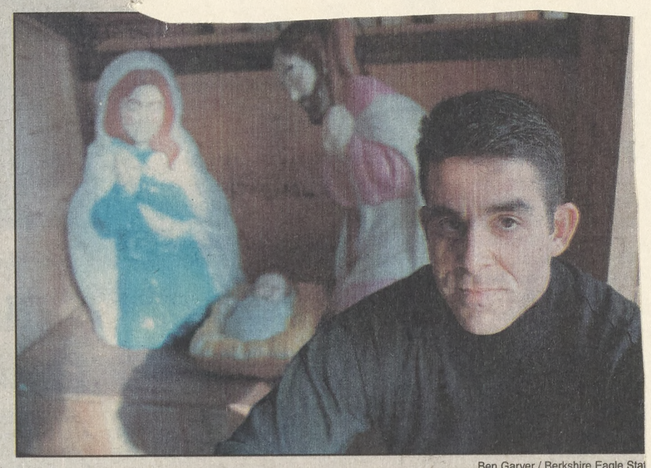
Papa said his desire to express his personal spiritual faith in public is allowed by the Constitution. Concerns about whether the display will "offend" someone are secondary, he said.

"Enough is enough," said Papa last week. "Nowadays you can't say 'God' in a public place or in a school without offending someone, and everyone's walking on pins and needles. I have the right to do this."

Indeed, the Parks Commission's discussion at the Nov. 30 board meeting was peppered with remarks suggesting that a religious scene in the park might be offensive to some people.

For many years the Knights of Columbus erected a creche at Park Square

CRECHE, continued on A6



Ben Garver / Berkshire Eagle Stat

Jon Papa wants to put this creche in Park Square.

In a letter to The Eagle, the Rev. Robert Kyte wrote that a creche is not 'a Christmas decoration like Santa Claus or Rudolph.'

■ Creche from A1

told Nilan after the meeting adjourned.

"We've had five meetings on this," Nilan replied.

Papa had sought legal help from the American Center for Law and Justice, an organization funded by Pat Robertson, a leader of the country's conservative Christian movement.

The coalition sent a demand letter to the city, citing federal case law supporting a private individual's right to place a Nativity scene in a public park. The letter promised a lawsuit if Papa was denied the right to display the creche.

Prior to its Nov. 30 vote, the commission received a memorandum from City Solicitor Kathleen G. Alexander in which she stated that a reasonable construction of case law supports Papa's right to erect the Nativity scene because it amounts to constitutionally protected speech. However, Alexander noted that the board's right to regulate the time, place and manner of the display is also well settled.

"The Pittsfield Area Council of Churches does not find a creche 'unfit' at Park Square," reads a Dec. 12 letter to The Eagle from the Rev. Robert R. Kyte, president of the council. "When the Park Square creche changed hands 10 years ago from the Knights of Columbus to [the council], we eagerly accepted the invitation of the members of St. Stephen's Church to place the creche on their front lawn. The Nativity creche is a religious symbol depicting for Christians the birth of Christ. We hold that its proper place is on church, not public, property. It is not, and should not be allowed to become, a Christmas decoration like Santa Claus or Rudolph."

12/15/98

■ Creche from A1

during the Christmas season. But about 10 years ago, the display was moved just across the street to the front lawn of St. Stephen's Church.

Two area religious leaders also wrote letters to the Parks Commission in which they said that church property — not the park — is the best location for such displays.

The Rev. Robert Kyte, pastor of the First Congregational Church in Dalton and president of the Pittsfield Area Council of Churches, wrote in his letter, "These days, Christmas symbols are placed everywhere, with little attachment to the real and original meaning of the holiday. A creche in the front of a church visibly ties the story of the Nativity to the Christian faith and church."

The Rev. J. Michael Povey of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church wrote that having a creche on his church lawn as well as on Park Square might give a wrong impression to passers-by.

"We would be embarrassed by the presence of what could be constructed as rival shrines," wrote Povey.

Papa's original request was for a two-day display of the Nativity, which was rejected by the Parks Commission. His revised request, he said, is for just a 24-hour display starting Christmas Eve.

The letter from the American Center for Law and Justice recaps a series of court decisions that assure a private individual's or organization's right to place a Nativity scene in a public forum. However, government sponsorship of religious displays, particularly when the religious display is limited to a particular religion, are considered unconstitutional, the decisions say.

The conflict in Pittsfield mirrors others that have occurred around the country many times. Just two weeks ago, on Nov. 30, a federal court ruled that the Somerset Fire Department's annual Nativity scene was unconstitutional because it suggested government sponsorship of a particular religious viewpoint.

But this week Somerset town officials rebelled on the lawn of their Town Hall. As reported by the Associated Press [Page A1, yesterday's Eagle], they placed a Nativity scene alongside an 18-foot-tall Santa and his reindeer; a large, illuminated 'Season's Greetings' sign; a plastic snowman; and a menorah and 'Happy Hanukkah' sign.

A balanced mix of religious and secular symbols has been ruled constitutional by the court, so the town apparently pulled out all the decorations.

Ann-Louise Lohr, an American Center for Law and Justice lawyer representing Papa, said the Pittsfield scenario differs from the town-sponsored Christmas scene in Somerset.

She said the Supreme Court has ruled that while government-sponsored religious displays are unconstitutional, a private display is allowed in a public site that is typically used by private groups or individuals to express their views.

Park Square fits that bill: Politicians announce their campaigns there, labor unions walk picket lines there, women's groups and animal rights groups have held events there.

Kate Alexander, Pittsfield's city solicitor, advised the Parks Commission before the Nov. 30 vote that Papa's request should be granted because Papa is a private individual. However, she also said the board has the right to set the terms, times and any conditions of the Nativity scene's placement.

Nilan said he doesn't believe the constitutional guarantee of "free speech" allows Papa to put up a structure in the park without the board's supervision.

But if Papa wants to stand in Park Square and speak about Christmas, he is free to do so, Nilan said.

Nilan said he doesn't believe the constitutional guarantee of 'free speech' allows Papa to put up a structure in the park without the board's supervision.

In a nine-page Dec. 7 letter to Alexander, Vincent P. McCarthy, senior regional counsel for the American Center for Law and Justice, requests that the city "cease and desist" from violating Papa's First Amendment right to freedom of speech.

"It is interesting to note that all of the federal judicial circuits ruling on this issue within the last few years have upheld the rights of private citizens to erect religious holiday displays in a public forum," he wrote.

McCarthy's letter outlines several cases, one of which stated: "By permitting religious speech in a public forum — whether in the heart of a core government building, in the Georgia Governor's mansion, or in the outer reaches of some state owned pasture, the state simply does not endorse, but rather acts in a strictly neutral manner."

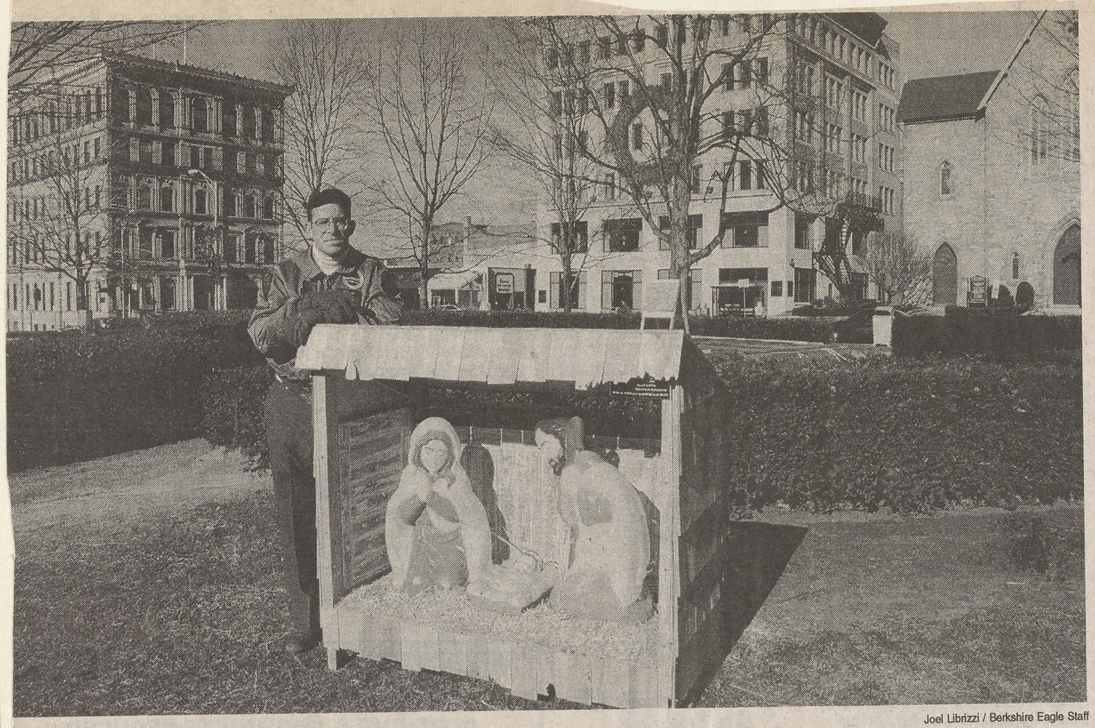
In another case, in which a private group of citizens sought to display a biblical scene in a town park gazebo, a federal circuit court ruled that the private group "has a right to express its views publicly in areas traditionally held open for all manner of speech. Tolerance of religious speech in an open forum does not confer any ... state approval on religious sects or practices."

Papa's chances of prevailing tomorrow night are likely to be good: The Nov. 30 board meeting, at which Papa's request failed by a 2-2 tie, included a note from the absent board member, Ben J. Kaplan. Kaplan indicated that while he would not support a two-day display, he would be inclined to approve a one-day display.

Nilan said he expects the full board to be present tomorrow night.

Lohr predicted the matter will be resolved tomorrow in Papa's favor.

"Ninety percent of these cases are resolved out of court when one side reads the law and finds out what the courts say is permissible," she said.



Joel Librizzi / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Jon Papa of Pittsfield stands next to the small creche he set up in Park Square from dawn to dusk on Christmas Day.

Creche inspires peaceful support

By Derek Gentile
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — To borrow a phrase from Austrian clergyman Joseph Mohr, all was calm, all was bright yesterday at Park Square.

Jon Papa's creche went up and came down in the span of about 11 hours yesterday without incident, except for a few hundred visitors who stopped by to support the Enterprise Street resident's crusade to set a creche in Park Square.

'No problems at all'

"It was incredible," said Papa. "There was a great show of support from people. We had no problems at all."

Papa and about a dozen volunteers arrived at Park Square at about 6 a.m. to set up the creche, which had caused a controversy in recent weeks over its appropriateness on public property. The creche was a relatively small one, and passers-by had to look hard from the street to see it during the day.

"It looked awesome," said Papa. "It was lit up and it looked beautiful in the early morning light. I wish we had been able to keep it up after 5 p.m., because it looked better at dawn and dusk."

Papa said that his brother-in-law, James Ross, stayed with the creche for the entire 11 hours. Papa visited the creche throughout the day.

Throughout the day, he said, people came up to him to thank him for his efforts.

"I have to say, I was really moved," he said. "Many people came up to me or my brother-in-law to express their support."

Papa said his brother-in-law estimated that about 250 people visited the creche yesterday.

Papa said that he and the volunteers removed the creche at 5 p.m., the hour appointed by the city Parks Commission for its removal. On Dec. 14, the commission reversed an earlier decision and allowed Papa, as a private citizen, to set up his creche for 11 hours on Christmas Day.

"Overall, it was a very positive day," he said.



More than 50 residents attended a Monday meeting to discuss the future of Silver Lake. Following a detailing of a consulting firm's draft plan, audience members separated into "work groups."

Action plan outlined for Silver Lake effort

Consultants on Monday detailed a five-year "action plan" to improve Silver Lake — which could see the polluted center city lake become a family recreational site.

More than 50 people gathered at the Berkshire County Courthouse for a meeting of the Silver Lake advisory commission, a group charged with identifying potential future uses for the lake.

Representatives of Synergist Technology Group, a grant-funded consulting firm hired to review the lake's potential, detailed a draft redevelopment plan.

"The redevelopment of Silver Lake and its surrounding environment depends on the availability of funding and the limitation of activities due to PCB contamination," the draft report states.

The report sets out two potential development strategies, each depending on available funding.

Should "minimal funding" be available, the city could potentially improve the aesthetics of Silver Lake and provide a partial walking trail system. The project would likely feature:

- landscaping along Silver Lake Boulevard
- creating a landscaped traffic island at the intersection of Silver Lake Boulevard and East Street
- development of a wood chip trail from East Street along Silver Lake Boulevard to the intersection with Fourth Street
- organization of a community "clean up day" to removed debris
- provision of "seed money" for park maintenance and for cleanup and waste removal.

Should additional funding be available, the project could be more comprehensive. Recreational opportunities could include a handicapped accessible trail, a boat launch, catch & release fishing areas, picnic grounds and a playground.

Silver Lake Boulevard could be closed to through traffic and converted to a pedestrian walkway.

In addition, the lake and its shoreline could be improved as a natural area "to create a more diversified wetlands."

Silver Lake commission chairman Peter Arlos said that at least one more public meeting will be held to gather input. Arlos, who initiated the effort to fund the study, called the potential refurbishment "a people's project" which has been developed with resident input rather than edicts from "self-anointed civic leaders."

Arlos added that potential funding from General Electric will play a vital role in the project. "We're counting on them to pick up the tab," he said.

The next meeting will likely be scheduled for early December.

Park Commission created precedent

To the Editor of THE EAGLE:

Dan Valenti confuses political correctness with the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. Mr. Valenti misstates constitutional law by writing "The law is clear — a private citizen has a constitutional right to do this." ("Do this" refers to erecting a creche in Park Square.)

Constitutional law permits free expression in public places — subject to the government's appropriate time, place and manner restrictions. Had the commissioners decided that Park Square was an inappropriate location for free expression, as displays could be distracting to drivers, thereby creating a public safety hazard, they could have designated any other public park as the appropriate place for free expression.

The commissioners chose Park Square as a forum for free expression when they decided to permit a Christmas tree to be erected in that location. Pittsfield Park commissioners may have erred in their decision to deny Jon Papa the opportunity to erect a creche in Park Square, but their real mistake was to create a public forum in the first place.

BARBARA A. SIMON
Great Barrington, Dec. 11, 1998

The author is general counsel, Institute for First Amendment Studies.

Creche display sets bad precedent

To the Editor of THE EAGLE:—

When I was quoted in The Berkshire Eagle about the Park Commission's approval allowing Jon Papa to place his creche in Park Square and was interviewed for Albany TV news, the impression by some may be that I am against the creche and its meaning. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The importance that this symbol holds for so many must be respected and held dear. Their devotion and beliefs should not be trivialized or degraded. This is the time of year when everyone should be comfortable in expressing his or her beliefs openly and with pride.

My opposition was not to the meaning of the display. My opposition was to the fact that a citizen was to erect a display on public property and then leave it there without supervision or representation. Under those circumstances, it is impossible to determine whose "freedom of speech" is being expressed. I believe that the Park Commission's decision will set a precedent that will allow displays about subjects that are not so widely supported. How do they now say no to displays that could be quite offensive?

What has made me more upset, however, was the treatment by the chairman of the Park Commission, Cliff Nilan. While it is the prerogative of the commission to decide whether the public will be allowed to speak at a meeting, he was determined that there would be no public comment. To make it worse, he even stated during the meeting that he had considered letting the public have two minutes to speak, but had decided against it. With only two people wishing to speak, this would have added only four minutes to the meeting and probably would not have changed the outcome. It would have been right to let us have our freedom to speak. Citizens should always have the opportunity to speak at any city meetings that are open to the public.

Freedom of speech is for everyone. We all have that right and should exercise that right every chance we get. But we should stand proud when we exercise that right. We should be willing to put our face and time commitment with our speech.

With so many different religions and beliefs it is impossible to wish everyone their own particular greeting. I choose to use a somewhat different approach. I use only one word. Peace.

CHARLES CIANFARINI
Pittsfield, Dec. 18, 1998

Parks need more than benign neglect

A feud over a beaver dam in Brattlebrook Park has highlighted the city's chronic neglect of its parks. Annoyed with the flooding of a footbridge, unknown users of the woodland paths illegally breached a beaver dam; in retaliation, beaver lovers destroyed the footbridge, according to observers of the standoff. Then, the bridge was clandestinely rebuilt by illegally cutting down nearby trees. The Conservation Commission, nominally the managing agency for the Wild Acres conservation area, concedes it has, as yet, no use plan for the park. Benign neglect is no way to oversee the city's public open spaces.

The Pittsfield Gazette September 17, 1998

Renovated Dorothy Amos park reopens



Carla Duval on Wednesday was among children and adults to enjoy the newly refurbished Dorothy Amos Park on West Street. The popular site offers a host of new amenities and equipment.

The Dorothy Amos Park on West Street reopened on Monday, restoring one of the city's most popular playgrounds after a nearly summerlong absence.

The park, after briefly being partially reopened, was shut down completely while contractors removed soil containing high levels of PCBs, a possible carcinogen.

General Electric, which funded the cleanup, expanded the project to include a complete park refurbishment. Additions and improvements include new landscaping, new sidewalks and basketball courts — the park in fact now features three courts instead of two. Other amenities include picnic tables, a swing set, bleachers, playground structure and a new park sign.

The project is nearly complete except for installation of the new entry sign. A ribbon cutting is anticipated although a date has not been set.

"The city and GE decided to open the park as soon as possible so that the community can enjoy it during the final days of good weather," said Jane Magee, a GE spokesperson. "We hope that this setting serves as a popular community asset for many years to come."

Pittsfield, Massachusetts, Saturday, January 17, 1998

Big Apple beckons Mets

Pittsfield team may move to Coney Island

By Greg Sukiennik
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — Forty years after Brooklyn lost the Dodgers, New York City and the New York Mets major league baseball club are looking to bring a ballclub back to the borough, at Pittsfield's expense.

The New York Mets, parent team of the minor league Pittsfield Mets, have discussed plans with New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani to move the Pittsfield team to a multimillion dollar sports complex planned for Coney Island. The plans are still preliminary, as they were born on Thursday as part of discussions between the city of New York and the New York Yankees about locating a Yankee minor league team on Staten Island.

Pittsfield Mets owner William Gladstone is still scheduled to meet with Pittsfield Mayor Gerald S. Doyle Jr. about a new or renovated stadium next week. But Doyle, who spoke with Gladstone by phone yesterday, noted that the city and the team are still talking, and that the team will still play its 1998 season here. Gladstone called Doyle to let him know a story about the plan had appeared in Friday's New York Daily News.

Negotiations continuing

"The Mets are an important part of our community, with many loyal supporters who look forward to each new season," Doyle said in a prepared statement, "and I pledge my support on behalf of the city of Pittsfield to continue positive negotiations with the Mets, and do whatever I can to keep this tradition alive here in Pittsfield."

But Doyle also sounded a warning about the city's ability to compete with the ambitious Coney Island plan. "However, if plans for relocation come to fruition, the city of Pittsfield is not currently in a position to make a counteroffer to the proposed relocation project," he said.

Gladstone said that the New York Mets could control the decision to a major degree.

"The decision is partly out of our control right now," Gladstone said. "If the [New York] Mets want to go to Brooklyn and we don't, they'll go to Brooklyn without us. Our option is dependent on what their option is, and we've made it clear over a number of years that the Mets and the New York-Penn League are not happy with Wahconah Park. That can't be a surprise to anyone. And we have been very much upfront with the possibilities."

Doyle, mindful of state opposition to funding a new stadium for the city, has said he would broach with Gladstone the possibility of renovating Wahconah Park. While Gladstone said he would not comment on that possibility until he hears Doyle out, he and other team officials have in the past

METS, continued on A5



Craig F. Walker
Owner William Gladstone

The Berkshire Eagle, Saturday, January 17, 1998 — A

Mets from A1

insisted Wahconah Park, despite its charm, won't meet the team's long-term needs.

In the story, which was first reported in Friday editions of the Daily News, Gladstone was quoted as saying "Obviously I need to look into the business details of it, but the fact that both my wife and I were born in Brooklyn makes it a very interesting proposition. I could get very excited about this."

The Coney Island concept was first discussed Thursday between Giuliani and Mets co-owner Fred Wilpon, a friend of Gladstone's and a Brooklyn native. Gladstone only learned of the plan when he was contacted by Daily News sportswriter Bill Madden for comment.

Although he feels the location would offer several advantages and a large fan base, Gladstone said it would be premature for him to favor that option over a continued presence in Pittsfield.

"I haven't had time to think it through," said Gladstone, who purchased the team in 1992 for $850,000. "Brooklyn has a major population, and the state and the city are going to build a major amusement facility. They say they have 100 million to do it."

"It would have to be attractive. It's a hell of a population," he said. "But it's so early on this."

The Pittsfield Mets, brought to the city from Little Falls, N.Y., in 1989 by then-owners Michael T. Casey of Dalton and current general manager Richard Murphy, had an agreement with the city of Pittsfield that the city would find the site and the finances for a new stadium by Jan. 15. Although a preferred site at the corner of North and Wahconah streets was found, the money never materialized, and that deadline — which Gladstone had extended from Oct. 30, 1997 — was not met.

Had the city held up its end of the bargain, the team would have entered into lease discussions that would keep it here for the next 10 years. The team has already committed to Wahconah Park for 1998. Last year, the city did $300,000 worth of work on the 79-year-old park, repairing the aging grandstand and installing a new outfield drainage system.

The cost estimate for that proposed new stadium is $16.5 million, and the outlook for state funding for the project has been grim due to legislative leaders' opposition to spending state money on professional sports. But Gladstone yesterday said he believes a new facility can be built for less money. "Based on what I was told by stadium builders, that stadium could be built for less," he said.

The proposed Coney Island sports complex, eyed for Old Steeplechase Park on the boardwalk of the famed amusement park and beach area, has an estimated cost of $100 million and would include the 7,000- to 10,000-seat baseball park, an indoor arena, a running track and a swimming pool. The city and the state of New York would split the cost.

Wilpon told the Daily News the idea came to him during a morning shower. "To be honest, it would be a dream of mine to be able to bring baseball back to Brooklyn," he said.

A key to the plan is the ability of Staten Island to attract a minor league team for the Yankees. Both the Mets and Yanks have used their veto power to prevent the other from putting a minor league team on Long Island, and the deal appears contingent upon both teams bringing a team to the city at the same time. According to the Daily News, Giuliani convinced Wilpon and Yankees owner George Steinbrenner that the plan could benefit both clubs.

Which team would represent the Yankees remains unclear. The Oneonta Yankees, who play in the same league as the Mets, are owned by Sam Nader, a friend of Steinbrenner's. If Nader doesn't want to move his team, the Yankees could move another class-A franchise to Staten Island, or provide several prospects for a cooperative team there.

Giuliani expressed excitement about the plan, and its possibilities for enhancing the Yankees-Mets rivalry, in his weekly radio show. He also said a task force headed by Staten Island Borough President Guy Molinari will review four or five potential sites for the Staten Island facility, and make a recommendation.

Last October, it was reported that the Pittsfield team was a potential tenant for a stadium being built in Central Islip, N.Y., in Suffolk County, Long Island. Soon afterward, the Yankees blocked the move, but according to Gladstone, plans to build the $14 million facility are still under way.

While the Coney Island option has its appeal, Gladstone said he has not written off Pittsfield yet. "One, nothing else is definite. Two, we don't know what Pittsfield will do, so it would be premature to say that. We will certainly be in Pittsfield in 1998, hopefully in 1999, and who knows."

Another reason for a new ballpark

The latest report that the Pittsfield Mets may move to a new Coney Island ballpark should certainly be taken with a grain of salt. The ballpark has been in the planning stage since 1986 and there are many pitfalls ahead, not the least of which is New York-Penn League approval of any franchise switch. The League may not be amused by the statement of Brooklyn Borough President Howard Golden in Wednesday's New York Times that it is "disappointing" that "a major league town" like Brooklyn would be saddled with a Single-A franchise. But the Coney Island threat does provide extra incentive for the city to build a new ballpark for the Mets, as well as for other community activities. A new stadium may persuade the New York Mets to keep the Mets in Pittsfield, a city that appreciates them, rather than move them to Brooklyn, which apparently would be insulted by their arrival. And should the Mets depart, a new ballpark, combined with the impressive attendance at Mets games, would make it that much easier for the city to attract another franchise.

9/17/98

Senior Drum Corps competition returns to Wahconah Park

PITTSFIELD — The Pittsfield Parade Committee has announced that after an absence of nearly 40 years, Senior Drum and Bugle Corps will return to the Wahconah Park field this summer. The Preview of Champions Senior competition will be held on Sunday, Aug. 2, at 2.

The parade committee has negotiated with Drum Corps Associates to sign seven competing corps including four former world champions. The competition will feature the Bushwackers of Harrison, N.J.; the Sunrisers of Pearl River, N.Y.; the Hurricanes of Shelton, Conn.; the Westshoremen of Harrisburg, Pa.; the Northern Lights of East Templeton; the Generations of Bristol, R.I; and the Class A Champion, Chieftains of Leigh Valley, Pa.

Taconic High band

The Taconic High School band will open the afternoon with the national anthem and other selections. The show will conclude with an exhibition by the world famous Hawthorne Caballeros Alumni Corps of Hawthorne, N.J. The Caballeros will be making the Pittsfield show one of only six scheduled appearances this summer.

Chairman of the event will be Paul Demastrie of Adams.

Tickets will be available on Thursdays from 4 to 8, Fridays from 1 to 4, and on Saturdays from 10 to 2 at Those Were the Days ... Drum Corps Museum in the Galleria, located on North Street next to City Savings Bank.

Ticket prices are $12 for box seats, $11 for upper grandstand and $10 for bleachers. Ticket prices on Aug. 1 and 2 will be $14 for box seats, $13 for upper grandstand and $12 for bleachers.

6/12/98

Councilors endorse new lease for Wahconah Park

Councilors voted 10-0 Tuesday in favor of a new license agreement allowing the Pittsfield Mets primary use of Wahconah Park during the 1999 baseball season.

The club also has options for the years 2000 and 2001.

The agreement between the city and National Pastime Corporation calls for an automatically waived $5,000 annual rental fee provided that the club hires an individual to perform field maintenance during the summer.

Other highlights from the agreement:

- the club gets use of the park for scheduled games through September 10 each year or through the end of the playoffs
- the club must play all but two home games at the field and must play at home on July 4
- the city reserves the right to use the park for events when games are not scheduled, subject to coordination with the club
- no inning of any game may begin after 1 a.m.
- the club must pay for utilities; the city pays for repairs and maintenance of utility fixtures
- the club can renew for the year 2000 if it requests such to the parks commission by October 31, 1999.
- the club has the right to sell advertising at the park.

6/25/98

Building a case for a stadium

The meeting next week between Mayor Gerald Doyle and Pittsfield Mets President William Gladstone is an important one for the city, regardless of whether or not the Mets eventually take up residence in a Coney Island pleasure palace. It is important to remember that a consultants' report asserted that a downtown stadium for baseball and community activities would benefit the city in the long run, and failure to think in the long-term has crippled Pittsfield. Renovating the old ballpark may be as expensive as building a new one, and the November referendum question on city funding of a new ballpark, besides being non-binding, was poorly phrased — surely if the city only had to pay part of the estimated $16 million cost it should do so. The Mets, who contrary to misinformation spread by foes are one of the top draws of the New York-Penn League, are valuable to Pittsfield, and area legislators should aggressively seek state funding for a ballpark that will benefit the city for decades even if the Mets choose to depart.

1/17/98

Doyle: He'll seek another team if Mets fly to Brooklyn or L.I.

1/18/98

By Greg Sukiennik
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — Mayor Gerald S. Doyle Jr., confronted with a $100 million offer the city can't realistically counter, said he will assemble a team to look for possible minor league baseball tenants who could replace the Pittsfield Mets at Wahconah Park, should the team move to Brooklyn or Long Island.

Doyle also said that when he meets with team owner William Gladstone on Wednesday, he will present him with a plan to renovate Wahconah Park with historic grant monies. The city Department of Community Development and the city's stadium consultants, Arrowstreet Ltd., are assembling a draft proposal for a rebuilt Wahconah Park, he said.

The city's attempts to find funding for a new stadium in which the Mets would play have not to date borne fruit.

The Pittsfield Mets are now being courted for two planned facilities — a $100 million "sportsplex" on Coney Island, in Brooklyn, and a $14 million stadium planned for Central Islip, N.Y., in Suffolk County, Long Island.

Either possibility would be attractive to the New York Mets, David Howard, the team's vice president for business affairs and general counsel, told The Eagle yesterday.

"If Long Island or Brooklyn present a viable opportunity, it would seem to me it would be hard for any other locality to match that," Howard said.

Howard also noted that four of the Mets' other farm teams are playing in new or nearly new stadiums, and that the team wants a new park for its New York-Penn League affiliate as well.

What role city government will play in Pittsfield's pro baseball future might be answered Wednesday, when Gladstone and Doyle come face to face at City Hall. Both men have deferred questions on plans for Wahconah Park, or the likelihood a new stadium can be built, until after that private meeting. The two men spoke by phone Friday, and Doyle let Gladstone know of his plans to

METS, continued on B4

Doyle to meet with Mets' brass to discuss stadium

By Greg Sukiennik
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — Mayor Gerald S. Doyle Jr. will meet with National Pastime Co. President William Gladstone on Wednesday to discuss issues surrounding the construction of a new stadium and/or renovation of 79-year-old Wahconah Park, and the future of the Pittsfield Mets minor league baseball team in the city.

Yesterday marked the deadline by which the city had pledged to find a site and the funds to build a new publicly-owned stadium which the Mets would use as their home field.

Funds missing

The city decided on a site at the corner of North and Wahconah streets, opposite Berkshire Medical Center, but has not found the estimated $16.5 million in government and private funds with which the park would be built.

If the city met that deadline, the team would have agreed to stay for the 1998 season, and entered into discussions for a 10-year lease for the new facility. Last fall, after reports surfaced that the team was considering a future move to a proposed new stadium in Central Islip, N.Y., the team announced it would remain in Pittsfield for the 1998 New York-Penn League season.

In a referendum last fall, city voters said they opposed the spending of city dollars to build the stadium. Furthermore, while the state has funded other sports facilities with public dollars — most notably a park in Lowell — Speaker of the House Thomas Finneran, D-Mattapan, has taken a strong stand against use of public dollars for sports facilities.

Doyle has previously said he would broach the idea of a renovated Wahconah Park, rebuilt with historic preservation dollars, with Gladstone.

The team has not offered comment on that idea yet, saying it wanted to discuss the options with Doyle first. The Wahconah Park site has been used since 1919, and the present grandstand was erected in 1949 50. Major improvements were made to the playing surface in 1975, and a new outfield drainage system was installed last spring.

The Mets drew 82,935 fans to Pittsfield last season in 35 home games, and the team responded by winning the New York-Penn League playoffs for the first time in the team's eight-year stay.

1/16/98

Mets to stay in '99

PITTSFIELD — The ownership of the Pittsfield Mets minor league baseball team has tentatively committed to playing in Pittsfield in 1999, and to keeping lines of communication open with Mayor Gerald S. Doyle Jr. and city government.

Doyle and William L. Gladstone, majority owner of National Pastime Co., the parent company of the Pittsfield Mets, announced those developments, as well as plans for continued cosmetic improvements and increased maintenance at Wahconah Park, after a 45-minute private meeting that both sides said went very well.

Gladstone said it would be "likely" that the team, which is already committed to Wahconah Park for 1998, will also play here in 1999. "I'm very encouraged by our conversation this morning," he said.

1/25/98

Mets from B1

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start looking for a replacement team.

"Basically, the bottom line is we can't compete with a $100 million proposal. I think that's a fair statement," Doyle said yesterday. "In the meantime, I'm going to put a team together to research other options and other teams, and Gladstone doesn't blame me for that. It's a business decision the city needs to make."

"One way or another, I want baseball here at the professional level," added Doyle, noting the Mets' prominence as a summer family tourist draw. "Naturally, I'd love that team to be the Mets. I think the team has done an outstanding job of promoting themselves, and the community and the county as a whole."

Doyle said he would ask Gladstone about advice he received from stadium builders at the recent winter baseball meetings. Those builders told Gladstone that a new stadium could be built for much less than the $16.7 million price the city's consultants quoted.

But Doyle also said he would not build a second-rate facility to save money. "We paid a quality designer to design a quality product. I don't think we should compromise," he said. "I only want the best for the city."

Meanwhile, the Long Island option, presumed to be dead when the New York Yankees exercised their territorial rights and blocked the Mets from applying for a move to Long Island late last fall, now appears to be back on the table.

The Long Island newspaper Newsday reported Friday that the New York Mets and New York Yankees have discussed a Mets farm team on Long Island, as well as a Mets farm team in Brooklyn's Coney Island. While Howard said yesterday he never specifically cited Long Island as an option, he acknowledged that the Long Island possibility was an "underlying assumption" in talks between the Mets and Yankees.

"I said that when the Yankees contacted us about the possibilities for Staten Island, I specifically said we are exploring that possibility within our market," Howard explained, clarifying his earlier comments. "Obviously Suffolk County is part of our market. So is Brooklyn."

The $14 million Suffolk County stadium plan is further along than the $100 million Coney Island plan, although there has apparently been difficulty in finding a suitable site for the 7,000-seat park in Central Islip.

Thursday, the possibility of moving the Pittsfield Mets to Coney Island arose during discussions between the Mets, the Yankees and New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani. The Yankees want to bring a team to Staten Island, but such a move would likely require a quid pro quo involving the move of a Mets minor league team to the New York area.

Friday, Gladstone said a decision to move the team to Brooklyn would rest largely with the New York parent team. Howard agrees such a move would be mostly the Mets' decision, "largely because it' territory."

Wahconah Park: Improved, but dated

What a difference a year makes. Last May, Pittsfield Mets owner William Gladstone complained bitterly about the condition of Wahconah Park, as the city's promised refurbishment of the stadium and the playing field was so far behind schedule that Opening Day was a risk. That was before the Mets won the championship, New York City Mayor Rudolph Guiliani proposed a new Brooklyn stadium for the New York-Penn League club, and before this city had a new mayor. On a tour of Wahconah this week, Mr. Gladstone had nothing but praise for the park's readiness for the June 16 home opener. But if Pittsfield wants to keep professional baseball in town, the city will have to do a lot more than replacing outfield sod and repairing raccoon vandalism at an aging park that doesn't pass muster under contemporary standards. Pittsfield needs a new stadium, if not for the Mets, then for another minor league franchise. Cities are competing heavily for lucrative franchises and Pittsfield can't compete with Wahconah Park.

5/14/98

High school games set for Wahconah

Improvements at Wahconah Park should make it possible for high school baseball teams to use the facility this spring.

In recent years, wet conditions have hampered efforts to schedule school games at the site.

On Monday, park commissioners accepted a request from school sports coordinator Jay Brock to schedule some games at Wahconah Park.

"With the new drainage, it should be O.K.," said community services director Bob Mellace.Last spring the city installed a new underground drainage system at the park.

2/12/98

Mets, city must stress communication

Lines of communication between city government and the Pittsfield Mets and their predecessors, the Pittsfield Cubs, have been historically poor. Therefore, it comes as encouraging news that Mayor Doyle and William L. Gladstone, the owner of the Pittsfield Mets, have committed to establishing open and clear communications. That could go a long way toward facilitating an ongoing relationship — one which appears possible given Mr. Gladstone's tentative agreement to keep the team here through 1999. Certainly, the scenario could change if any of New York's proposals to build the team a new stadium materialize, but, as of now, these schemes are entirely speculative. Mssrs. Doyle and Gladstone should continue fostering a city-team rapport, while the city escalates its search for funding for a new ballpark here.

1/31/98

Mets owner praises work done on Wahconah Park

5/13/98

By Greg Sukiennik
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — With about a month until opening day, the Pittsfield Mets are for the most part pleased with the condition of Wahconah Park. But the possibility of an eventual move of the franchise to Coney Island, N.Y., still looms in the distance.

William Gladstone, president of National Pastime, the team's owners, toured the 79-year-old park with Mayor Gerald S. Doyle Jr. and Robert S. Mellace, director of the city Department of Community Services, early yesterday morning. Opening day is June 16.

While there are some raccoon-related issues with offices under the park grandstand — the animals clawed through ceilings in search of warmth and food — the facility is, for the coming season, in good shape.

Earlier this spring, a contractor who worked on the outfield drainage system last year returned to plant grass in areas where it hadn't grown back. Mellace said the contractor did more work than had been expected, seeding, fertilizing and aerating the outfield.

The year-old drainage system has done its job, too. Mellace reported there is no puddling in the outfield, despite the steady rains that have fallen in the past week.

The team would also like some minor repairs to the entrance and grading of the parking area.

Otherwise, Mellace said the stadium has a clean bill of health. "Obviously Wahconah Park has long-term capital needs, but for the short term we will meet the immediate needs of the club," he said.

Everyone would like to see the park taken care of through longer-term capital improvements," he added, "but in terms of some things we have taken care of for

WAHCONAH, continued on A4



Joel Librizzi / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Pittsfield Mayor Gerald S. Doyle, left, and William Gladstone, president of National Pastime, tour Wahconah Park.

5/13/98

Wahconah

from A1

the beginning of the season, I think we addressed a lot of the issues last year. You have to remember it's an old facility, as much as we all like Wahconah Park."

High school baseball teams have been kept off the field up until now, as work on the outfield prevented its use. But by late May, it will be possible for high school regular season and post-season tournament games to be moved to Wahconah, possibly at night.

Field 'looked great'

Gladstone, who voiced displeasure over conditions during last year's team media day, was pleased with what he saw yesterday.

"The field looked great," Gladstone said in a phone interview. "The drainage system seems to be working, and to the extent the outfield needed grass and sod, it has all been taken care of. It has never looked better."

Meanwhile, in Brooklyn, plans are moving ahead to bring back baseball to the borough, at Pittsfield's expense. The fiscal 1999 budget proposed by New York City Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani includes provisions for a $100 million multi-sport facility in Old Steeplechase Park, on Coney Island, to which the team would move. The city and the state of New York would split the cost.

Competing interests

However, both the New York Mets and the New York Yankees are presently clamoring for new stadiums.

Asked about the plans and a possible future move, Gladstone replied such a decision would largely be up to the New York Mets.

"As far as we know, [Mayor Rudolph Giuliani] has proposed a stadium in his budget. There's a difference between proposal and enactment," Gladstone pointed out. "There are steps to go through, at least at the City Council of New York level. So we're not talking about tomorrow. We'll let that take its course."

'Excellent relationship'

On a possible move to Brooklyn, Gladstone said, "The New York Mets are going to be the ones who make that decision." But in the same breath he added, "We're very pleased with the interest and the reaction of Mayor Doyle, and I think we're going to have an excellent working relationship and good communication with him."

Gladstone had indicated earlier that there is a good possibility the team will play here in 1999.

As for the parent club, a top New York Mets official said the team was enthused about the prospects for bringing baseball back to Brooklyn. But he also added that if the team wanted to stay in Pittsfield, it would be largely up to Gladstone.

"We're intrigued by the prospect for returning professional baseball to Brooklyn. It's something that's exciting to us," said David Howard, the New York Mets' senior vice president for business and legal affairs.

As for the Coney Island plan, Howard added the team expects "in the near future we will have more formal discussions." Those discussions will likely take place "in the next couple of months, with a decision some time this year."

What about staying in Wahconah Park?

"On that I'll defer to [Gladstone]," Howard said. "This process is a joint process. There are some concerns that Bill Gladstone will have as owner of the team, and other issues we have as the major league affiliate."

Doyle was unavailable for comment yesterday afternoon.

■ Mets from A1

stone said, "so there are no gaps in knowledge and no surprises."

The two sides discussed the possibility of a renovated Wahconah Park, and Doyle said acting director of Community Development Kenneth Walto will continue to work with consultants Arrowstreet Ltd. to arrive at a firmer cost estimate. The preliminary report issued by the consultant last year pegged the cost of rebuilding Wahconah Park at $11.5 million.

Doyle, who values the team for the family entertainment it provides and for the tourists and county residents it attracts to the city, also said the city has not given up the search for funds to build a new city stadium, which the team would use. The city had settled on a site at the corner of Wahconah and North streets, at an estimated cost of $16.7 million.

Doyle also said the city would investigate communities that have recently built stadiums to see how they were funded and what challenges were overcome. And he and team general manager Rick Murphy reiterated that if the city built a stadium, it would be a community facility supporting a number of uses.

The mayor earlier warned that the outlook for state funding is not rosy, and cited that as a reason he has considered pursuing historic preservation funds for 79-year-old Wahconah Park. But yesterday, Doyle said he hasn't given up on public funding yet. "They found a way to get money to Lowell," he pointed out. "Sooner or later they will come up with a way."

The state is contributing to a new stadium that will serve the New York-Penn League franchise there, as well as the University of Massachusetts at Lowell. State funds were channeled through the state university facilities fund to pay for the stadium.

Priorities

But Doyle also noted that the city has a lot of capital projects on its plate for which it can request state funds— the Colonial Theater, the Central Block project and a conference center among them — and that the city must set priorities for legislators to pursue.

Gladstone said that it's still "very, very early" for plans for New York City and the state of New York to build new facilities for the team in Brooklyn, and that whether the team would move to the city would rest largely with the team's major league affiliate, the New York Mets.

Asked what he would do if the Mets asked their minor league team to move to the city, Gladstone said it was too soon to say. He did, however, acknowledge that National Pastime has had a good relationship with the parent team, and that the team's treatment of its minor league affiliates has been among the best in professional baseball.

1/22/98



Craig F. Walker / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Mayor Gerald S. Doyle Jr., left, and William Gladstone of the Pittsfield Mets' parent company share a laugh in Doyle's office yesterday.

Pittsfield Mets 'likely' to play here through '99

By Greg Sukiennik
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — The ownership of the Pittsfield Mets minor league baseball team has tentatively committed to playing in Pittsfield in 1999, and to keeping lines of communication open with Mayor Gerald S. Doyle Jr. and city government.

Doyle and William L. Gladstone, majority owner of National Pastime Co., the parent company of the Pittsfield Mets, announced those developments, as well as plans for continued cosmetic improvements and increased maintenance at Wahconah Park, after a 45-minute private meeting that both sides said went very well.

Gladstone said it would be "likely" that the team, which is already committed to Wahconah Park for 1998, also will play here in 1999. "I'm very encouraged by our conversation this morning," he said.

The meeting took place days after reports surfaced that New York state and New York City have proposed a new stadium for the team in Brooklyn, as part of a $100 million "sportsplex" on Coney Island. Furthermore, a proposal to build a $14 million stadium in Suffolk County, N.Y., has not yet been ruled out for the Pittsfield team. A New York Mets official said last week either location would be attractive.

But Doyle and Gladstone stressed the team's plans to play here in 1999, and the commitment of both sides to establish better lines of communication.

"What Mayor Doyle and I agree on is open and clear communications," Glad-

1/22/98

METS, continued on A7

A wild, wet Mets opener



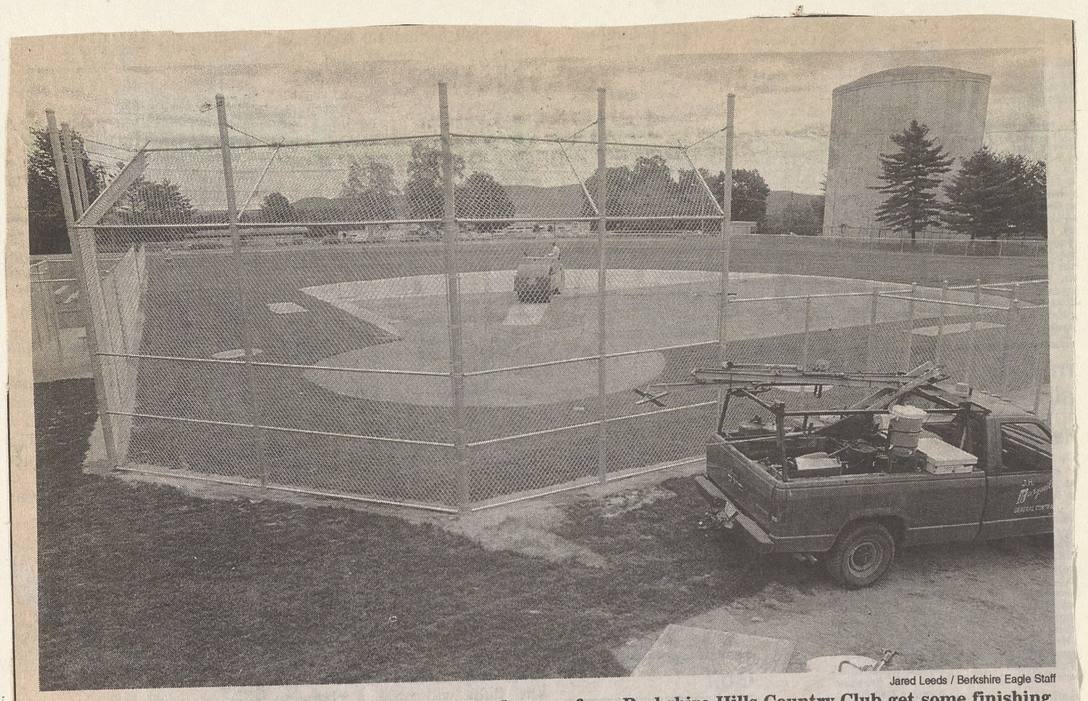
Ben Garver / Berkshire Eagle Staff

The Pittsfield Mets, shown above during introductions, opened their season last night at Wahconah Park with a 12-inning 4-3 win over the Lowell Spinners. Coverage, Page C1. Below, a Park Department worker begins the task of draining the parking lot. Weather stories, Page C1.

6/11/98



Joel Librizzi / Berkshire Eagle Staff



Jared Leeds / Berkshire Eagle Staff

New fenced-in girls' softball fields on Benedict Road across from Berkshire Hills Country Club get some finishing touches yesterday in preparation for Monday's opening ceremonies.

New softball home for the girls

Two new fields at Benedict Road will be dedicated Monday at 5 p.m.



Jared Leeds / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Maxymillian Construction foreman Ernie Salvatore mixes sand and topsoil, helping to get the new Benedict Road girls' softball fields ready for Monday's grand opening.

Major work has also been done at Pittsfield High, Taconic, Clapp Park and the Zoo Field.

6/12/98

By Bob McDonough
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD

Two months ago, it was a big pile of dirt being moved about and sculpted by J.H. Maxymillian Construction bulldozers.

Come Monday, the hilltop acreage on Benedict Road — featuring two spanking-new softball fields — will be officially dedicated as the new home of the Pittsfield girls' softball program.

The project, talked about for 10 years and officially underway since about $250,000 was earmarked out of the city's 1997 capital budget, will open with a ceremony Monday at 5 p.m.

Members of the Parks Commission, Pittsfield Mets mascot "Boomer" and several Mets players are scheduled to take part, but the key dignitaries will be the two mayors who helped launch the project, Edward M. Reilly and Gerald S. Doyle Jr. Doyle will throw out the inaugural first pitch to former Mayor Reilly to symbolize the continuity of the project between both administrations.

"A first-class venue for softball is a fantastic addition to the city, and it is great to see that this project has finally come to fruition," Doyle said in a prepared statement.

FIELDS, continued on C3

Fields from C1

After the ceremony, two league games will be played to launch the facility, with Berkshire Agency vs. Flynn's Pharmacy and the Mariners vs. Bill's Bombers.

Refreshments will be available and the public is welcome to attend.

Located directly across Benedict Road from Berkshire Hills Country Club and adjacent to the Babe Ruth baseball field, the new two-field facility will serve as home to the Pittsfield girls' league, which features nine teams in its older Major League and eight in the younger Minor League. Until now, teams in the league had led a vagabond existence, playing games at Pittsfield High, Clapp Park, Lakewood Field, the Common and the so-called Zoo Field at Springside Park.

Since the new facility has only two fields, it won't be able to take over the entire girls' schedule, and some games will still be played on some of those other fields, according to Major League president Dave Hinkell.

"It's not a cure-all, but it's certainly a wonderful start," said Hinkell, adding that there is room for a third field to be added to the site in the future. "We've got a base with two really nice fields, plans for a third, and if we grade the road to the Zoo Field we'll have four fields right there in the same area."

The Pittsfield girls' league will have first dibs on the use of the new fields, but it is expected that high school teams and others will use them when the league is not in season. The Department of Parks and Recreation will have final say on who can use the fields and when.

The two new fields are surrounded by chain link fencing, with fenced-in dugouts, outfield warning tracks and five-tier bleachers at each field. The outfield fences are 225 feet from home plate. Sod was placed for the outfield grass, and a crew from Maxymillian was on the scene yesterday afternoon applying the finishing touches to get the field ready for the grand opening.

Hinkell, who has worked with the girls' league for 12 years, said the idea for the new facility was launched about 10 years ago.

"About 10 years ago, we formed a committee and went to Mayor [Anne] Woitkowski, but we had no political clout, and the city was laying people off," said Hinkell, who works in the city accounting office. "Then I started working for the city under Mayor Reilly, and his daughter played [softball] with my girls. We were talking about forming parent groups, but he said no, if we're going to do it, let's do it right." The funding was then approved by the City Council, whose president was Doyle, who also had a softball-playing daughter.

Grander plans, originally

The original plan was for something more than the two-field facility.

"Originally, we envisioned four fields with lights and a two-story building, but we learned real quickly there wouldn't be enough money for that," said Robert Mellace, the city's director of community services.

There are currently no plans to light the fields for night games, "but I can't say there won't be any in the future," said Mellace, who added that neighboring residents might have some concerns if lights are proposed.

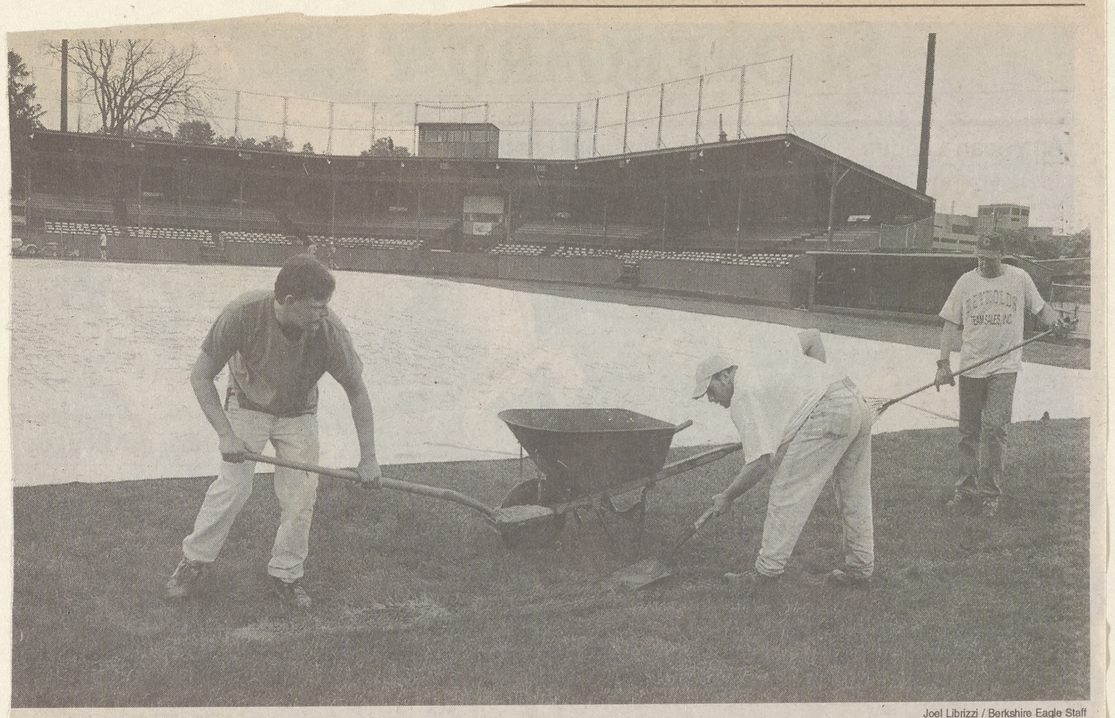
In the long range, there is still some discussion about constructing a two-story building which would feature a concession stand, rest rooms and a second story with a meeting room and observation deck, Hinkell said. Donated materials and volunteer labor would be needed, along with some fund-raising plans, he added.

The Pittsfield girls' annual tournament, which usually attracts upwards of 20 teams, is still scheduled for the Berkshire County Softball Complex July 25 and 26. Some of the games, Hinkell said, could be played at Benedict Road.

Booming softball season

The Benedict Road facility, which so far is not named, is the latest in a series of improvements at city softball fields this year. Earlier, volunteers put together a new varsity field at Taconic High School; new fencing, a new clay infield and outfield sod were installed at Pittsfield High as part of a PCB cleanup project; and infields were skinned (grass removed) at both Clapp Park and the Zoo Field.

6/12/98



Joel Librizzi / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Working early yesterday to prepare the field at Wahconah Park for last night's Pittsfield Mets opener are, from left, Ryan Gooch, Mike Hall and Jim Izzo. Here, they're removing dirt that had washed from the infield to the outfield.

Wahconah workers get MVP vote

6/17/98

By Howard Herman
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — After a full weekend of rain, Wahconah Park was ready for the New York-Penn League season last night.

Mets manager Roger LaFrancois said the field was in as good a condition as it could be, considering the rain. He was impressed with the work that was done to get the park ready.

"I got here at 9 a.m. and they had 10 guys working on the field," he said. "It's a credit to the staff to get the field ready. They're the MVPs of the day."

"The city of Pittsfield, Tony Stracuzzi and the Public Works Department, and the Parks Department have been instrumental in preparing the playing field," Pittsfield Mets general manager Rick Murphy said some three hours before last night's opener with the Lowell Spinners. "The people behind the scenes aren't often in the limelight."

City workers, coupled with Mets groundskeeper Jason Mancivilano and members of the front office, were at the park at 7 a.m., working on getting the 80-year-old facility ready for action.

Murphy said in the 10 years he's been with the Pittsfield Mets, he has never seen as much rain as what hit Berkshire County in the last several days.

While the parking lot remains closed due to flooding, the field itself is in pretty good shape.

"There's no standing water in the outfield. That's something we've been exposed to before," said Murphy. "But the field is playable. It won't be in Wahconah Park's best conditions because of the elements. That day will come later this summer."

The drainage system that was installed last year handled the water with few problems. Some water had to be pumped out of the catch basins behind the park.

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The Mets are already one player short for the 1998 season. Outfielder Chase Mulvehill, who was originally pencilled in as last night's starting left fielder, may have mononucleosis. LaFrancois had Mulvehill set to bat fourth.

"If he's going to be out a long period of time, we'll send somebody up here," said Jim Duquette, the New York Mets' director of Player Development who was at the park last night. "If he's going to be out a short time, I'd be inclined not to send anyone."

Mulvehill will undergo more tests today.

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Pittsfield Mayor Gerald S. Doyle Jr. threw out the ceremonial first pitch. Although her father is no longer mayor, Sara Reilly made her annual return to sing the National Anthem. She is the daughter of former mayor Edward M. Reilly.

In addition, the Mets' New York-Penn League championship banner is flying from the flagpole at the front of Wahconah Park. It'll remain there all season.

•

Duquette is making his first visit to Wahconah Park since returning to the Mets organization last fall. He spent the 1997 season as the farm director of the Houston Astros.

Pittsfield Mets Notebook

The Dalton native said he was very pleased to learn of the tentative agreement between Pittsfield and National Pastime Inc. on an extension of the licensing agreement for Wahconah Park.

"We like the league, we like the location. This has always been a good development league and that's the bottom line," said Duquette. "We've had a tremendous relationship with [owner] Bill [Gladstone], Rick [Murphy] and [assistant GM] Dick [Lenfest Jr.]. We're happy. From a personal standpoint, I'm happy, too. It allows me to come up and see my family."

Duquette said he likes what he sees from the 1998 Pittsfield Mets.

"I'm happy with the club. It's so hard to tell with new draftees what to expect," he explained. "The pitching is going to be solid here. Defensively, we're going to be pretty good. Offensively, I don't know if we have home run power, but we have guys who can drive the ball.

"There's no doubt they'll play hard," Duquette continued. "The manager is a throwback. If they don't play hard, they're not going to get an opportunity to play much."

•

The Mets were unable to work out at Wahconah Park Monday because of rain. So instead, the club took a trip north to Duquette's alma mater, Williams College, for a workout in the Towne Field House.

"It was worth the trip," said LaFrancois. "[Williams baseball coach] Dave Barnard was very courteous to us. The pitchers had a chance to throw a little bit. It was definitely advantageous to us. It's nice to know it's available to us."

■ Wet from B1

Parks Department tried to pump some of the water out of the parking lot, but since there was so much, their efforts were futile. However, inside the park, the new drainage system kept flood waters at a minimum.

"We're doing everything in our power to make sure we have an opening day today," Doyle said yesterday.

Elsewhere, programs offered by the West Side Neighborhood Resource Center, including the Youth Initiative Basketball program held at Pitt and Tucker parks, and the West Side Neighborhood Softball program, held at Pitt Park, have been postponed as a result of the soaking rains.

"The fields are just soaked," said Cheryl Nolan, the center's coordinator. "Especially for softball. The kids can't go out and play, but I've seen some of them out playing at the end of the street where [the water] runs off."

William L. Forestell, the city's commissioner of public works and utilities, said there have been no reported problems with overflowing storm drains.

Clear runways

One thing that the rains haven't hindered is business at the Pittsfield Municipal Airport.

Airport manager William Weibrecht credited the clear runway conditions to relatively new pavement with "special grooves" that carry excess water away.

"They're like the grooves on the edge of the highway only they're smaller," Weibrecht said. "They shoot the water into channels and off the runway. It's safe to fly."

Representatives from Adams, Dalton and Williamstown said yesterday that there were no flood-related problems reported. No one from North Adams was available for comment.



Joel Librizzi / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Parking was not allowed at Wahconah Park last night for the Pittsfield Mets home opener with the Lowell Spinners. Rain in the area in recent days has raised rivers and caused minor flooding.

Arboretum master plan unveiled

A crab apple walk, an ornamental grass maze, a butterfly & humming bird garden — all of these could be a part of the proposed Vincent Hebert Arboretum at Springside Park, according to a University of Massachusetts consultant.

UMass graduate student Brian Higgins on Monday outlined for the parks commission a draft of a "master plan" for a proposed arboretum, a place to observe and study trees and other plantlife.

Higgins said the arboretum, in addition to being scenic, would educate the public about garden design, plant growing and landscaping. "I think this would be a great resource for this city," he said. "I think it's got great potential."

The arboretum would encompass several acres of land near the park's entrance. The initial draft calls for creation of nearly one dozen individual gardens or walks, including a wetland boardwalk, an orchard, a bulb & herb garden, house & patio gardens and a memorial hospice garden.

Parks commissioners voiced support for the project. "This is a very good start," said Anthony Massimiano. "Very well done."

Community services director Robert Mellace said that the project could be constructed in stages, as money becomes available through grants and other sources.

"We're trying to look at this realistically," Mellace said. "We know we don't have a lot of money."

Higgins said the final report, which he expects to complete by early June, will include potential funding sources. The consultant believes that Springside could be a tourist destination.

"I think that you could draw more people here, easily," he said.

A group of Springside advocates will hold a park cleanup on April 25, beginning at 9 a.m. For more information on the cleanup, call 443-4241.



Joel Librizzi / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Taking time to smell the flowers

Cathy Bak of Cheshire visits the tulip beds at Springside Park in Pittsfield, a Mother's Day tradition of 30 years' standing that she put off until yesterday because of Sunday's rain.

Forestry Council to host program on caring for trees

PITTSFIELD — The Massachusetts Community Forestry Council will host a daylong workshop, "Caring for the Community Trees," on Tuesday, June 23, at Springside Park.

The program is part of a summer-long series being held throughout the state. Professionals and community groups, as well as individuals who want to know more about providing proper care for trees are invited.

Topics to be covered include hazard tree identification, new street tree selections, building partnerships, tree planting and forestland improvement. Rounding off the program will be a field trip to a local community forest.

Registration is $10 and will begin at 8:30 a.m. Participants are asked to provide for their own lunch. The program will run until 3.

Information: the Massachusetts Community Forestry Council office, toll-free at 888-307-8733.

Springside Park friends need volunteer help

To the Editor of THE EAGLE:—

The Friends of Springside Park is an independent citizens' watchdog group opposed to commercial development or environmental degradation of Springside Park. It is supportive of activities compatible with those goals which are free to all who may wish to participate. We also want better security in the park. However, formal gardens such as those in Stanley Park require expensive maintenance and building them may destroy habitat.

The Talk Back column has had several items recently calling for more activities at Springside Park. Where are these callers when volunteers are needed at the park? The city of Pittsfield does not have the money to run activities without the help of volunteers.

On April 25, the Friends ran a cleanup in the park. There were 21 volunteers in the park that day. We did a good job but more help would have made the task go faster. Despite good advertising, there were not many new faces.

Pittsfield Beautiful has established an ad hoc committee to act as an advisory group to the Vincent J. Hebert Arboretum in Springside Park. That group needs volunteers. The activities subcommittee of the advisory group runs events such as Winterfest and guided tree, bird, and wildflower identification walks. They also sponsor lectures and slide shows. That group needs volunteers.

If you want more activities, come on out. Get to work and lots more can be done. If you have an interest in any of the groups I mentioned, please call me at 443-4241 or send e-mail to nee@vgernet.net.

NANCY EPPLEY

Pittsfield, June 22, 1998

The author is president, Friends of Springside Park.

Concert scheduled at Springside Park

PITTSFIELD — The Fellows of the Tanglewood Music Center will perform chamber music in the gardens of Springside Park, 874 North St., as part of the 1998 Pittsfield Summerfest program. The free concert series of three evening performances will begin tomorrow and continue on Tuesday, July 21, and Tuesday, Aug. 11, from 7 to 8.

Thursday's concert will include Mozart's Quartet in G, K. 387 and Shostakovich's Quartet No. 7, Op. 108. Information: the Parks Department at 499-9343.

Eagles Band plans free outdoor concerts

The Eagles Band will present its sixth annual "Concert In The Park" series June 30, July 14, and July 28, on the lawn of Springside House. The free Tuesday evening concerts begin at 7 p.m.

Concertgoers should bring lawn chairs and blankets. Refreshments will be available. In case of rain, the concerts will be held at Morningside Community School.

Lyndon Moors will conduct the 45-member community band. The theme of the first concert is "Marches for All Occasions." On July 14, "Spotlight on Soloists" will be the focus. The series will conclude on July 28 with "Band Classics," a program of traditional music for concert band and wind ensemble.

Slide show June 25 on master plan for Hebert Arboretum

PITTSFIELD — The public has been invited to attend a free slide show of the master plan for the Vincent J. Hebert Arboretum at Springside Park on Thursday, June 25, at 7:30 p.m. in the Berkshire Athenaeum auditorium.

The program will be presented by Brian Gibbons, a master's degree candidate at the University of Massachusetts. Gibbons has spent the last year researching and developing a proposal for an arboretum that includes tree walks, native gardens, and wetland boardwalks.

Gibbons graduated from Monument Mountain Regional High School in 1988 and Berkshire Community College in 1994. He received his bachelor of science degree in horticulture from the University of Georgia in 1996. After graduation, Gibbons interned at the Sir Hillier Gardens and Arboretum in Hampshire, England.

Gibbons' work has been funded through a grant received by Pittsfield Beautiful Inc. from the Department of Environmental Management.

Springside Park arboretum to cover 40 acres of city land, plans show

By D.R. Bahlman
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — Plans for the Vincent J. Hebert Arboretum at Springside Park were unveiled before a recent gathering of about 40 people at the Berkshire Athenaeum.

Illustrating his presentation with slides, the plan's designer, Brian P. Gibbons, said last Thursday that the arboretum — a place where varieties of trees are grown so people can study and enjoy them — will cover about 40 acres in the 231-acre park.

Gibbons, a Berkshire County native who is a master's degree candidate at the University of Massachusetts, has been working on the plan since September 1997.

He is a graduate of Monument Mountain Regional High School, Berkshire Community College and the University of Georgia, where he received a bachelor's degree in horticulture in 1996.

The effort is funded through a $3,000 grant from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management and the U.S. Forestry Service, together with $2,000 and other matching contributions from Pittsfield Beautiful.

The features

Among the features of the plan are a lilac walk, an herb garden, a butterfly and hummingbird garden and an orchard. Examples of "residential horticulture" will be employed around Springside House, the architectural centerpiece of the park.

The plan seeks to combine learning with looking: For instance, the plantings around Springside House will demonstrate how horticulture can be used to effect energy savings by serving as a natural wind break. Plants in the herb garden will be examples of those used in "kitchen gardens," said Gibbons.

An ornamental grass "maze" is planned for another section of the arboretum. The maze features grasses of different heights.

The design also calls for a gazebo to be situated near the former observatory at the park. Gibbons said he envisions the area being used for stargazing.

A boardwalk is planned for a wetlands area in the park, and students from nearby Reid Middle School will benefit from the outdoor classroom, said Gibbons.

Parks get labor funds plus Springside support

Councilors voted to transfer $25,500 in funds to support parks department needs identified by councilors during last month's budget review.

Twenty thousand dollars will be transferred into a "seasonal labor" account for immediate use. Traditionally the monies are not available until the city's "free cash" is certified in October. The monies are being borrowed from the veterans' services account and will be "returned" when the free cash is released.

In addition, $5,500 from the finance department budget is being transferred to fund projects at the Springside Park greenhouse and arboretum.

Plans for arboretum will be outlined at meeting

A lecture and slide show reviewing the proposed master plan for the Hebert Arboretum at Springside Park will be presented Thursday, June 25 at 7:30 p.m. at the Berkshire Atheaneum.

Brian Gibbons, a master's degree candidate at the University of Massachusetts, has spent the last year researching and developing a proposal for an arboretum that includes tree walks, native gardens, and wetland boardwalks.

Gibbons graduated from Berkshire Community College in 1994. He received his bachelor's of science degree in horticulture from the University of Georgia in 1996. After graduation, Gibbons interned at the Sir Hillier Gardens & Arboretum in England.

The Pittsfield Gazette January 22, 1998

Springside celebrant

Bill Carrigan enjoys Pittsfield's recreational 'jewel'

By Anthony Fyden

Bill Carrigan knows Springside Park well.

He's enjoyed exploring the expansive site for most of his life. He and his dog, Barney, still walk at least twice each day in the park. Each of Bill and Carol Carrigan's eight children grew up with the park as an extended backyard.

"It's a jewel, right here in Pittsfield," he said. "It's just a little walk and you can be in almost wilderness."

The Pittsfield Gazette
M.V.P.
Most Valuable Pittsfielders

The Carrigan family has lived at the park's edge for nearly 35 years. Bill and Carol Carrigan both grew up in Pittsfield and spent time at the park as children.

Their appreciation for the site only grew when they moved to the park's outer reaches and had children of their own. "We had eight children and they all loved the park," Carol Carrigan said.

"There's so much there for adults too," Bill Carrigan said. "There's skiing and jogging trails and just acres and acres of beautiful hiking trails. I don't know if people realize what they have here."

Winterfest event

Those who want to learn what Springside has to offer have an ideal opportunity this weekend. The Vincent J. Hebert Arboretum group, of which Carrigan is a member, is sponsoring the second annual "Winterfest" at Springside Park on Saturday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The free event will feature cross country skiing, snowshoeing and skating, a snow sculpture contest and cardboard sled contest. Naturalists will present animal tracking and tree identification demonstrations. Refreshments, such as steaming hot cocoa, will be available.

Perhaps Carrigan inherited his love of the city's parks from his father, William J. Carrigan, a parks commissioner for nearly 30 years and a vocal advocate for protecting park land.

"He would always say don't give up one foot of park space for anything else but parks," Carrigan said. "You'll find a million good reasons to use that land for something else but once it's gone, you can never get it back."

Carrigan envisions Springside Park, in addition to serving as a destination itself, as an ideal visitor's center for tourists. The site could feature information on a host of regional sites. Its scenic setting and views of the city would serve to whet the appetites of tourists for further exploration.

"They talk about North Street revitalization," Carrigan said. "And we hear about doing things on South Street with the [Colonial] theater. Well I would like to expand that to the north part of North Street."

Carrigan hopes that Winterfest will reintroduce Springside Park to a community that once brought teeming activity to the site. During its heyday, thousands of Berkshire County residents flocked to Springside almost year round.

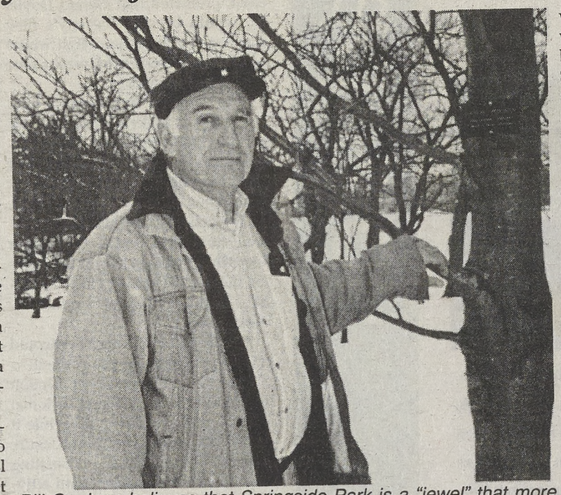
Springside's swimming pond was once the most popular in the region, and when it froze over in winter, skaters skimmed across it in large numbers. Residents played sports of all kinds on the park's grounds. A petting zoo drew families from near and far.

Tough times

Perhaps the park eventually became too popular. The pond became too polluted for swimming and was drained. The petting zoo fell victim to vandals. Budget cutbacks brought on by Proposition 2 1/2 also took a severe toll on the park's overall condition.

Although the large crowds of visitors stopped coming, those who loved the park, including Bill Carrigan, were determined not to let it die. Carrigan and others founded the all-volunteer Friends of Springside Park.

"We were keeping up the park as best we could," Carrigan said. "We organized cleanups and did a pretty good job of it."



Bill Carrigan believes that Springside Park is a "jewel" that more people should enjoy. A group of park advocates is sponsoring "Winterfest" on Saturday to highlight the expansive park.

The park's expansive size— nearly 230 acres — had always been one of the park's best features, but it made the group's job difficult. "It's very difficult to maintain," Carrigan said.

The Friends of Springside Park were aided by other organizations which also sought to bring the site back to its former glory. The Springside Greenhouse group set up at the site; the General Electric Elfun Society undertook an extensive sprucing up of Springside house. Pittsfield Beautiful took an interest in the park as well.

The various groups achieved several grants and the money has been used to make improvements at the park as well as to hire a consultant to develop a "master plan" for the site.

The Arboretum plan was developed and named after longtime park commissioner Vin Hebert. A large tulip bed was planted, bringing springtime splendor to a hillside overlooking downtown Pittsfield.

Eagles Band concerts in the summer brought back a tradition, drawing music lovers of all ages.

Carrigan notes that the group of people who believe in Springside's future is growing. "There are a lot of volunteers and they do a lot of good work," he said.

Those interested in the free Winterfest event can meet at Springside House at 11 a.m.

Arbor Day ceremony planned at Springside Park

PITTSFIELD — The Vincent J. Hebert Arboretum, theRetired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) and Center for Ecological Technology (CET) will host an Arbor Day celebration on National Arbor Day, April 24, at 3 at the arboretum at Springside Park. Mayor Gerald S. Doyle Jr. and Tommie Bailey will preside at the dedication.

RSVP, in cooperation with the City of Pittsfield Parks Department, will be planting two trees in memory of Martin J. Keehnle and Louis J. Russo, both former members of the RSVP board of directors.

The CET will also plant a tree to celebrate the first year of existence of its Business Recycling Cooperative. Since last spring, more than 40 Pittsfield businesses have recycled 72 tons of paper and cardboard, representing 1,440 trees that were saved from the papermaking process.

Sen. Andrea F. Nuciforo, who recycles his office paper through the cooperative, will give certificates of appreciation to cooperative members.

4/20/98

Springside House to host bird program

PITTSFIELD — Springside Park resident naturalist Victor C. Capelli will present his first program of the year titled "Birds Back from the Jungle, Neo-Tropical Migrants, Their Songs, Calls and Natural History," on Friday, May 1, at 7 at The Springside House on North Street.

The slide show will identify some of the 50 species of wood warblers, vireos and other tropical bird migrants which summer in the Berkshires.

On Saturday, May 2, at 10, in front of the Springside House, a birdwatching trip will take place through the park to specifically search for the birds shown in the slide program. Binoculars and appropriate footwear are recommended.

Information: Victor C. Capelli at 1-518-733-5281 or Elizabeth Kulas at 443-5348. 4/26/98



Ben Garver / Berkshire Eagle Staff

1/30/98

Decisions, decisions

Jonathan Phelps plans his next move in making a snow dolphin during Winterfest, held last Saturday in Pittsfield's Springside Park.

Public invited to help in plans for arboretum

PITTSFIELD — The public is being asked to help formulate final plans for the Vincent J. Hebert Arboretum at Springside Park.

A "Community Survey" sheet has been compiled by Brian Gibbons, University of Massachusetts intern who is working at the Hebert Arboretum through a grant received by Pittsfield Beautiful from the DEM Urban Forestry Council.

Anyone wishing to participate may pick up a copy of the survey at Springside House, 874 North St. (the Pittsfield Parks Department headquarters), the Berkshire Athenaeum, City Hall, and Downtown Pittsfield Inc., 90 North St.

"This participation by the citizens of the community is a very important step in developing a concept of what the arboretum will become," said Gibbons, a graduate student who received his undergraduate degree from the University of Georgia before going to England for hands-on work in arboretia for several months.

The Hebert Arboretum, located in one of Pittsfield's oldest parks, is in a prime location for tourists visiting the city. Gibbons has urged the public to pick up a survey sheet at one of the above locations, fill it out and return it by Saturday, Feb. 14 to: Pittsfield Parks Department, 874 North St., Pittsfield 01201, Attention: Brian Gibbons.

2/7/98



Joel Librizzi / Berkshire Eagle Staff

5/5/98

Time for plants

Eagle columnist Shirl Fowler of the Springside Greenhouse Group holds a rare flowering maple plant. That plant, along with others, will be for sale Friday and Saturday from 10 to 4 during the annual plant sale at the Greenhouse at Springside Park in Pittsfield.

June 30, July 14 & July 28 6/17/98
Eagles Band Concerts in the Park
Springside Park. Series of three Tuesday evening concerts, sponsored by the Department of Parks. 7pm-8pm, 874 North Street, Pittsfield, 447-8334.

Gravel, wood chips donated to city park

PITTSFIELD — J.H. Maxymillian Inc. recently donated two truckloads each of gravel and wood chips to the Vincent J. Hebert Arboretum at Springside Park.

Kevin Phelps, newly appointed property manager of Springside Park, said he was excited about this latest show of community support toward the renewal of the park. He plans to use the wood chips to upgrade the trails frequently used by the public. 6/25/98

PITTSFIELD: Volunteers supervised by Victor C. Capelli, resident naturalist at Springside Park, will monitor and record the number of birds hatched and fledged in bluebird and tree swallow nest boxes built over the past two weeks by some members of the Springside Park Arboretum group.

The information collected will be given to the Audubon Society for statewide compilation. Those wishing to contribute time by helping out may contact Capelli at 1-518-733-5281, Bill Carrigan at 443-0586 or Elizabeth Kuklas at 443-5348. 3/31/98

Annual plant sales set for this weekend

5/7/98

The Springside Greenhouse Group will conduct its annual plant sale Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The sale coincides with the spring display of tulips at Springside Park. There is no admission charge.

"Downtown in Bloom," sponsored by Downtown Pittsfield Inc., will be held Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Boys' & Girls' Club. The event includes a plant sale, crafts and special activities. Admission is $2 for adults.

7/14/98

Eagles Band to present concert

PITTSFIELD — The Eagles Band will present a "Spotlight on Soloists" concert tonight at 7 on the lawn of Springside House, 874 North St., as part of its annual "Concerts in the Park" series.

Lyndon Moors will conduct the band, which is the oldest continuing performing ensemble in the Berkshires, in a program featuring Eagles Band soloists and sections. Admission is free. Concertgoers should bring lawn chairs and blankets. In case of rain, the concert will be at Morningside Community School.

The concert series is sponsored in part by Pittsfield Summerfest and the Pittsfield Department of Parks and Recreation.

Springside Park is living laboratory

To the Editor of THE EAGLE:—

Nancy Eppley's comments on preserving Springside Park's natural habitat [letter, July 1] and other people's comments regarding the revitalizing of Springside Park in view of the recent master plan presentation by Brian Gibbons are both critically and intensely important items in the conservation of Berkshire County's natural resources. Springside Park has the potential of becoming the best and most beautiful of all Western Massachusetts's city parks, equally in the master plan development of the Vincent J. Herbert Arboretum and in the preservation of Springside Park's critically endangered "wild" areas.

In the last two years, visitors and residents of the city have enjoyed participation in the wildflower walks conducted by Phyllis Pryzby and environmental education programs, slide shows and demonstrations presented by yours truly, but only because Springside Park has the unique offering of so many diverse and overlapping natural habitats. These include: Relic New England woods comprising more than 50 species of native trees and shrubs, Upland New England field succession, complete with herb, forb and tree pioneer species, a migratory bird migration "funnel" that provides rest and sanctuary to migrating warblers, vireos and other migrating songbirds, micro-niches and "vernal pools" for frogs and salamanders, tremendous wildflower diversity — which now numbers more than 135 species (as compiled by Phyllis Payzby, myself and Elizabeth Kulas), and wetland habitats that are home to dozens of mammal and bird species.

On a recent bird walk, I identified a black-throated gray warbler in Springside Park, which, according to Norma M. Purdy (the person who records bird sightings for the Berkshire Museum) is an avian event! According to the records, the last sighting of this warbler was on Dec. 8, 1923 in Lenox. But it was an immature bird and was found dead the next day. I can't even begin to describe the variety and bird "noise" from migrating songbirds in Springside Park that have been witnessed by many birdwalk participants.

In addition to the biological diversity exhibited in Springside Park, the ecotone (the edge) between the Arboretum, with its established formal plantings, new gardens and the potential of "new" horticulture developments is a vital "living laboratory" in the midst of a modern urban landscape. Pittsfield residents, Berkshire County residents, visitors, and concerned environmental scientists should all take advantage of the opportunity to visit Springside Park, volunteer their services to help protect and improve the park and participate in the park's various environmental educational programs.

The infrastructure that is growing in Springside Park, complete with trails, birdhouses, foot-bridges, recreational facilities and picnic areas, should go hand in hand with the environmental protection of the park's wild and "undeveloped" zones. It is imperative that Springside Park's unique natural history be considered as part of the overall master plan, as part of a systematic and comprehensive plan for the conservation of plant and animal communities in the state of Massachusetts.

VICTOR C. CAPELLI
Stephentown, N.Y.
July, 5, 1998

7/16/98

Eagles Band to give series finale tonight

PITTSFIELD — The Eagles Band will present the final concert in its 1998 "Concerts in the Park" series tonight on the lawn of Springside House, 874 North St. The hour-long concert will begin at 7.

Lyndon Moors will conduct the Eagles Band, which is "the official band of the city of Pittsfield," in a program of band classics, featuring traditional music.

Admission is free. Concertgoers are asked to bring lawn chairs and blankets. If it rains, the concert will be held at Morningside Community School.

The concert series is sponsored in part by Pittsfield Summerfest and the Pittsfield Department of Parks and Recreation.

7/28/98

Grant to assist Reid students in work on arboretum

PITTSFIELD — The Vincent J. Hebert Arboretum and John T. Reid Middle School have been awarded a $3,025 Urban Planning and Education Grant from the Department of Environmental Management for their joint project titled "PACT: Promoting Awareness of Community Trees."

The award will be used to help fund the development of user-friendly interpretive trails developed by Reid Middle School sixth-graders in the arboretum.

Throughout the 1998 to 1999 school year, students will study the topography and natural history of the arboretum, physically create interpretive trails that enhance visitor understanding of the arboretum, develop interpretive printed materials for visitor use and create activities and kits that will enhance the educational experience.

Some of the studies will be done during the school day as part of the regular science curriculum, while most of the work will be done by students participating in after-school programs, with the assistance of teachers and adult volunteers.

Peter Webber, commissioner of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Management, notified Reid sixth-grade science teacher and grant contract manager Dina Samfield of the award in a letter last June.

8/3/98

Growing up with Pittsfield's Springside Park

10/4/98

By Evangeline Prince
Special to The Eagle

AVERILL PARK, N.Y.

Springside Park in Pittsfield was once the place to go to for all Morningside neighborhood youngsters.

Mother would pack our Roy Rogers lunchpail with (recycled) pickle jars filled with Kool-Aid; cookies and fruit, maybe a Bit-O-Honey or a Sky Bar; or in season, a blueberry muffin. Our special favorite was a peanut butter and marshmallow sandwich, although sometimes we preferred a catsup sandwich.

A group of us, usually four or five, would climb the rocks at the far end of the pond and sit there and eat that lunch and afterwards play a game of hide and seek through the woods. We were even daring enough to roll ourselves down the steep bank just above the pond.

After a quick change into our bathing suits, we were then ready to splash in the pond (which was then almost waist-high to an 8-year-old.)

With swings and slides and teeter-totters, all the fun we could ever want could be had before the St. Mary's church bell rang for 3 o'clock and it was time to go home.

If it was springtime, we would fill said pickle jar with pollywogs to be brought home as souvenirs and kept on the back porch for a couple days, in hopes that their legs would sprout.

Later on, as teenagers, we attended dances at the big Springside house.

There was also a wading pool at Crane School on the other end of Springside Avenue, but we all knew that only "babies" went there.

My favorite memory of Springside Park, though, was a winter one, involving my father. During a suppertime conversation, we children teased our dad mercilessly about his not being able to ice skate (most likely because we had never seen him skate!).

On the following cold and snowy Sunday afternoon, we were told to "load up" into the car and he drove us to the park. He had a pair of ice skates on the front seat next to him, which he had borrowed from a friend at General Electric.

Needless to say, my father COULD ice skate and we three children stood awestruck as he circled the pond a couple of times and then did a perfect figure eight on the ice.

Later he took us to the movies at the Tyler Theatre and we proudly told Mrs. Shea, the owner, that our father could ice skate.

She, of course, said she never doubted it for a minute.

The Families column is open to Eagle readers who want to share a thoughtful or humorous real-life family experience. Send submissions to Families, Features Department, The Berkshire Eagle, Box 1171, Pittsfield, MA, 01201. Articles must be signed. Please include a daytime phone number. Sorry, submissions cannot be returned.

51.

Wild Acres seeks help to pay for work on dam abutments



Ted Giddings

Our Berkshires

Directors of the Friends of Wild Acres — the popular recreational facility off Barker Road in Pittsfield — don't usually solicit funds at this time of year. The 1998 fishing derbies are history and the annual appeal for monetary contributions to buy trout isn't made until sometime in January at the earliest. But in the meantime, the board members have been eyeing the increasing cracks and leaks in the pond dam abutments and have decided it's high time to cry "Help!"

In May 1995, funds for dam repairs were sought from the city administration, and the request was referred by the City Council to the Conservation Commission. But "nothing happened," Bernard J. Goclowski, Friends president, told the directors at their recent meeting at the Wild Acres cabin. Discussion resulted in the decision to go public with the problem and to ask for donations of money.

Those who wish to contribute may mail their checks marked "Dam Repairs" to Friends of Wild Acres, P.O. Box 1542, Pittsfield, 01201. The Friends is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization, and the tax-exempt number is 249-2600.

At the board meeting, it was reported that donations in memory of George Wilson and Joseph Zaccari have been received. Also, Gerry Miller, chairman of the polenta dinner in February (date to be announced), issued an appeal for donations of venison. Call 443-5564.

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You don't have to wait for the fifth annual dinner, auction/raffle Nov. 7 of the Sportsmen for Land Preservation to buy a chance on one of the choice items that will be raffled that night at the Stockbridge Sportsmen's Club. It's a "millennium" model classic doubles shotgun and is on display at Dave's Sporting Goods, 1164 North St., Pittsfield. Tickets on the gun are being sold there at $50 each. The sale is limited to 100 tickets, and a minimum of 30 must be sold for the raffle to take place.

You don't have to be at the dinner to win the gun, but you'll miss an increasingly popular event if you aren't. All money raised by the Sportsmen for Land Preservation is used for open space land preservation in the Berkshires with the exception of some money donated to youth and women's sporting programs. Preserved land isn't posted and is open to hunting, fishing and other recreational activities.

Information: Todd O'Neil, 442-6117.

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Implementation of Canada's new Firearms Act, which was scheduled for Oct. 1, has been postponed until Dec. 1. In making the announcement, Anne McLellan, minister of justice and attorney general, explained that the law enforcement community, particularly in Ontario, had asked for additional time.

"It is critical that we have a high level of public safety from the first day," she stated. "The extra 60 days will ensure that vital police data is completely loaded on the system and will also allow more time for additional training of the chief firearms officers' staff at provincial sites. I believe that the two months' adjustment will assist all of our partners to be better prepared for a successful launch on Dec. 1."

The Firearms Act requires the licensing of all gun owners by Jan. 1, 2001, and the registration of all guns by Jan. 1, 2003.

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SCATTER SHOTS: Dan Miraglia won Berkshire County Bass Association's final tournament of the season Sept. 30 on New York state's Mohawk River with a catch of five bass weighing 11 pounds, 3 ounces. Also catching five were D.J. Benham, second, 10 pounds, 10 ounces; Rick Turczak, third, 9 pounds, 14 ounces; and Charlie Herzig, fourth, 5 pounds, 4½ ounces.

Season's champion was Benham, followed by Miraglia, Herzig and Mike Pigott. Awards will be presented at the BCBA's annual banquet next January.

Rainbow trout averaging more than a pound each were stocked this past week by the western district fisheries crew in the following waters: Onota Lake, Pittsfield; Stockbridge Bowl, Stockbridge; Laurel Lake, Lee; Windsor Pond, Windsor; Windsor Lake, North Adams; and Highland Lake, Goshen. The trout came from the Sunderland hatchery.

It pays to be persistent, according to Pittsfield fisherman Laurence Kickery. "I had four on the first day and six on the second but they got off," he said in telling about fishing New York state's Salmon River. "But then I hooked this coho and landed it after 45 minutes with the help of one of my buddies." He said he took it on a J. Plunge, and it weighed 15 pounds.

Rain can't dampen derbies at Stockbridge, Wild Acres



Ted Giddings

Our Berkshires

Despite a few rain showers and a thunderstorm that drove most boats off the lake for a half hour, the annual Stockbridge Sportsmen's Club's spring fishing derby drew 90 anglers to Stockbridge Bowl last Sunday from dawn to 3 p.m.

Although participation was well below normal for the event, Tim Minkler, veteran derby chairman, reported some good catches were made. Heaviest was a 5½-pound, 20½-inch largemouth bass taken by Tony Percy of Sheffield. Rich Hendrickson of Westfield caught the largest trout, a 21½-inch, 3-pound brown, and Carl Soules of Lee reeled in the largest pickerel, 24 inches, 3½ pounds. Frank Audio of Housatonic took the biggest bullhead, 11½ inches, 1 pound.

In the children's division, 12 years old and under, there was a tie for first place between Jorden Olsen, 6, of Lee and Adam Hendrickson, 12, of Westfield, each catching a 16-inch, 1¾-pound trout. Jonathan Soules, 10, of Sheffield was second with a 16-inch, 1¼-pound trout. Delores Hunt, 11, of Stockbridge won the bullhead division with a 10½-inch, half-pounder, while Rob Sykes, 9, of Pittsfield caught the biggest rockbass, a quarter-pounder.

Derby raffle winners were: Jim Zucco, Canaan, Conn., $250; Robert Rhoades, Lee, $100; and Karl Cooper, Stockbridge, $50.

Also dampened but not canceled by the rain was the Friends of Berkshire ARC's annual fishing derby at Wild Acres pond for persons with disabilities. Thanks to the pavilion at the recreational area, the anglers kept dry while enjoying grilled hot dogs, hamburgers and soda. "And they did well in catching some of the trout stocked by the Friends of Wild Acres," Don George of the sponsoring organization reported.

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Tom Keefe, western district manager of the state Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, told Berkshire County League of Sportsmen members Wednesday night at their monthly meeting at Lee Sportsmen's Club that as of May 18 more than 113,210 trout have been stocked in district waters. This is 86 percent of the district's allocation of 131,610. "We'll continue stocking through the end of May and possibly into the first week of June," he said.

The following waters were stocked with trout the past week by the western district fisheries crew:

Windsor Lake, North Adams; Windsor Pond, Windsor; Chickley River, Savoy, Hawley, Charlemont; Cold River, Charlemont, Florida, Savoy; Otis Reservoir, Big Benton Pond, Little Benton Pond, Otis; Roaring Brook, Williamstown; Kinderhook Creek, Berry Pond, Hancock; Hoosic River North Branch, Clarksburg.

Also, Housatonic River Southwest Branch, Onota Lake, Pontoosuc Lake, Pittsfield; Tom Brook, Secum Brook, Lanesboro; Konkapot River, Monterey, New Marlboro; Green River, Alford, Egremont, Great Barrington; Laurel Lake, Goose Pond, Lee; Lake Buel, Monterey; Stockbridge Bowl, Stockbridge.

Also, Farmington River, Otis; Sandisfield; Littleville Lake, Huntington; Plunkett Lake, Hinsdale; Westfield River West Branch, Huntington, Middlefield; Knightville Area, Norwich Lake, Huntington; Deerfield River, Florida, Charlemont.

Keefe also reported that at the end of the first three weeks of the spring turkey season which ended yesterday, 477 birds had been recorded at check stations. This compares with last year's three-week total of 447, or 30 more. "Last year's final district total was 524, and the statewide total 1,414," Keefe said.

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Chairman George L. Darey of the state Fisheries and Wildlife Board reported receiving a call from former Governor William F. Weld urging him to exert his influence with sportsmen to support the Cellucci-Swift ticket for governor and lieutenant governor. A member of the board for 20 years and its chairman the past 14 years, Darey admitted being discouraged by the attacks on sportsmen's interests in letters to the editor of The Eagle and the failure of sportsmen to respond to them. He predicted that the solid and progressive record of the state fish and game administration will be in serious trouble if Cellucci and Swift are defeated.

Peter J. McBride of Pittsfield, a director of GOAL (Gun Owners Action League), reminded the sportsmen of the Richmond annual town meeting Wednesday night at 7:30 at Richmond School when "a hunting by permission of the land owner only" article will be considered. He urged Richmond sportsmen-voters to attend, as well as non-resident sportsmen, although he said he didn't know if they would be allowed to speak.

Others who spoke at the league meeting were Mike Yacino, executive director of GOAL; Mike Moss, president of the Massachusetts Sportsmen's Council and Greg Morgan of Southampton, who is seeking the Republican nomination for U.S. representative in the First Congressional District. A decorated war veteran, he said he is unopposed in the primary election and will be going all out to defeat U.S. Rep. John W. Olver in the November election.

•

Veteran basser and columnist Frank Maher won Greylock Bass Club's first tournament of the season April 26 at Congamond Lake, Southwick with a catch scaling 12 pounds, 12.5 ounces. Rick Turczak was second, 6 pounds, ½ ounce; Joe Ramos third, 5 pounds, 6.5 ounces; and Jim Underhill fourth, 5 pounds, 5.5 ounces.

Rick Turczak and Randy Emerson took lunker honors with a 4-pound, 10.5-ounce largemouth. Don Van Tassel took non-boaters honors with 8 pounds, 9 ounces, while Jason Pemble was second, 5 pounds, 10 ounces. A total of 24 bass were caught in the tournament, weighing 58 pounds, 12 ounces.

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STRIKES AND NIBBLES: Fishing regulations adopted recently by the Fisheries and Wildlife Board do not become effective until Jan. 1, 1999, according to Mark Tisa, assistant director/fisheries. These include the removal of Onota Lake and Goose Pond from the list of special brown trout waters.

The annual Windsor Kids Derby in memory of Ralph and Betty Kendall will be Saturday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the Windsor Fire Pond near the fire station. The pond will be stocked with trout, and there will be prizes and free refreshments.

Also, don't forget the sixth annual Harry A. Bateman Memorial Jimmy Fund Fishing Derby Sunday, May 31, 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Onota Lake. Registration will be at the Controy Pavilion until 11:30 a.m. Registration fees are $10 for adults and $5 for children 5-14. Trophies and prizes will be awarded.

Ronnie Salice of Lee bagged a 24-pound turkey in Tyringham. Checked by Margaret Beckwith, Lake Buel Road, Great Barrington, it may be the heaviest taken in the Berkshires this season.

City creates park especially for girls & women

Softball diamonds shine

5/14/98

By Anthony Fyden

A field of dreams is about to become a reality.



The new girls' softball complex should be open by mid-June, officials say, making high-quality fields available for players like Jenn Wright of Pittsfield High School.

Within weeks, the long-planned girls' softball complex will open off Benedict Road.

"It's about time," said a smiling Lori Baumann, a PHS freshman. "They've been saying they were going to do this for years."

The new site, although scaled down from original plans, represents a major step forward for local girls' softball, which players and coaches say has been relegated to second-rate fields for years.

The $225,000 complex features two fields and room for construction of an additional field. Viewing stands, players' benches and regulation fences will be installed.

Left out of the project "because of budget constraints" were lights for night games, bathrooms and a concession area, said director of community services Robert Mellace.

"When this project first started, the vision was to have these fields lit," Mellace said.

Budgeting concerns, in fact, were responsible for much of the project's delay. City officials were forced to

See SOFTBALL page 9

Pittsfield softball tryouts scheduled

Tryouts for the Pittsfield girls' softball age 16-and-under all-star team will be held on Saturday from 9-11 a.m., and Sunday from noon until 2 p.m. at Pittsfield High School.

Any girl already playing in the Majors with Pittsfield girls' softball and who is not committed to any other all-star league is eligible.

Information: Coach Rocca, 442-0856; Coach Tesoniero, 442-3686; Coach Birch, 447-7176.

6/23/98

Pittsfield girls' softball meeting Feb. 11

The Pittsfield Girls' Youth Softball League has scheduled its 1998 organizational meeting Feb. 11 at 7 p.m. at Springside House, 874 North St. All executive board members, coaches and anyone interested in coaching should attend. Information: Dave Hinkell, 499-9343.

2/5/98

Pittsfield girls' softball sign-up set

The Pittsfield Girls' Youth Softball League has scheduled registration Saturday from 10 to noon and Monday from 6 to 8 p.m. at Springside House, 874 North St. The league is open to all Pittsfield girls ages 9-16. Registration fee is $15 ($25 for a family), and players must bring a birth certificate to registration. Information: Dave Hinkell, 443-5383.

4/10/98

Pittsfield softball tryouts Saturday

The Pittsfield Girls' Summer Softball League has scheduled tryouts Saturday from 9 to noon. Tryouts for the Minor League (ages 9-12) will be at the Zoo Field at Springside Park, and for the Major League (ages 13-15) at Clapp Park. Players not already registered must have a birth certificate, a signed parent consent form and registration fee. Registration is $15 per player, or a maximum of $25 per family. Information: Bill Burch, 447-7176.

4/30/98

Pittsfield softball tryouts this weekend

The Pittsfield Parks Department girls' softball program has scheduled tryouts for its 14-under tournament team at Lakewood Field Saturday from 9:30 a.m. to noon and Sunday from 4 to 6 p.m. Those who try out must be league members.

Information: Art Brodeur (443-8761) or Jim Wallace (499-3854).

5/28/98

Softball complex will open next month

continued from page 1

repeatedly pare the project down. Even in recent months, officials had hoped to include at least the bathrooms and stanchions to allow lights to easily be installed later.

"There wasn't enough money in the budget to accommodate that at this point," Mellace said.

But, as Mellace notes, the high quality fields — which will be designated specifically for girls softball — are the project's key element. "It will give these girls an acceptable place to call home," he said.

As of this week, construction crews from Maxymillian were still grading, sodding and leveling the fields. Contractors from Berkshire Fencing are scheduled to begin work as soon as this week, Mellace said.

Depending on when the workers complete their jobs and how quickly the new grass grows, the complex could host its first games by mid-June, Mellace said.

The complex is nestled on a large lot across from the Berkshire Hills Country Club. The two upper lots are near completion while an untouched field, on a lower level, could be the site of a ballfield in the future.

For Mayor Gerald Doyle, Jr., who has lobbied for the complex for years, the park's construction represents a personal victory. "They're all talking about it ... It gives a whole new definition to girls' and women's softball," he said. "I think it's great."

The mayor said that the establishment of the high-quality fields mitigates the long wait. "It's something that turned out right," he said. "Once we got it going, it didn't take long."

The city parks department will coordinate use of the fields. Softball coaches and advocates have anxiously awaited the complex's opening, Mellace noted: "They've been banging down my door asking me when it's going to be ready."

Softball booster David Hinkell believes that the complex is something that local girls have deserved for a long time. "The fields that these teams played on were in terrible condition," he said. "This is going to be a great facility."

Girls' teams have been playing at several locations throughout the city, including Pittsfield High School, Clapp Park and at Lakewood. Younger children have been playing at the "zoo field" at Springside Park.

Hinkell noted that girls' softball remains a popular sport. This year, some 280 girls — making up 17 teams — are part of the city's league.

Hinkell believes that parents of league players may be willing to perform some of the maintenance at the new complex. Without a diligent maintenance effort, he said, the new site could quickly fall into poor condition. "That's something that [league officials] have already talked about," he said. "Maybe that's something we could do as a league."

5/14/98

The mayor pitches in for softball



Mayor Gerald S. Doyle, in photo at right, delivers the ceremonial first pitch to officially open the city's new two-field girls' softball complex on Benedict Road. The pitch was caught by former Mayor Edward M. Reilly, whose administration got the ball rolling, so to speak, for the project two years ago. About 125 people attended the ceremony, which featured remarks by both the current and former mayor. In bottom photo, Sara Porter of the Yankees fields a ground ball during warmups for a game in the Pittsfield Girls' Softball League, which will be the primary tenant of the new complex that was completed at a cost of about $250,000.

Photos by Jared Leeds / Berkshire Eagle Staff



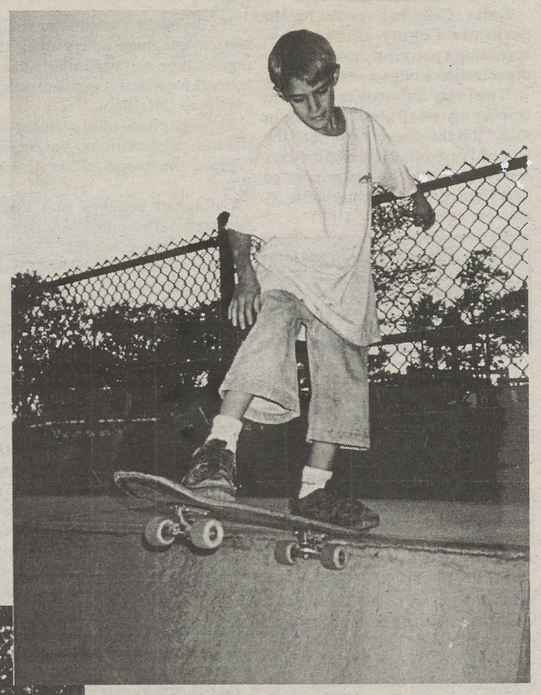
7/2/98

WHEELS

NEW SKATE PARKS AT THE COMMON AND CRANE PARK ARE ATTRACTING DROVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE.



New skateboard and inline skating parks have been a big hit so far. Nearly 60 teens wheeled around the new skate park at the Common on Tuesday, including Sandeé Reardon, Dorothy Wickenheisser, Angie Womble, Mike Connors, Shamia Berkeley, Tracey Turner and Mike Mongeon.



Anthony Esposito prepares to step off one of the Common skate park's ramps.



Helmets are required at both city skate parks — although perhaps only 10 percent of the skaters wore head gear on Tuesday. Christopher Lepotakis came ready to skate.



Chris Smith stands atop the "pyramid."



Bicycles are technically not allowed at the skate park, but nobody seemed to mind BMXers like Jason Pemble pedaling the course.



The Crane Park rink off Springside Avenue features a full size street hockey rink. About one dozen kids skated at the Park early Tuesday evening, including Daniel Brigley.

Photos by Anthony Fyden





Photos by Ben Garver / Berkshire Eagle Staf

'It's the North Pole calling'

12/15/98

Four-year-old Connor Lein, at left, takes a 'long-distance' call last night during the Pittsfield Department of Parks and Recreation's annual 'North Pole Calling' program, in which volunteers call children whose parents have signed them up. Above are Paul and Rita DiVirgilio, otherwise known as Santa and Mrs. Claus, who were making calls from Berkshire Bank. They later called Connor, asked him whether he had been a good boy, and talked about snacks for Santa, reindeer issues and what Connor wants for Christmas.

Pittsfield soccer accepting applications

The Pittsfield Summer Soccer League is accepting applications for the 1998 season. The season runs from May 18 to July 10. Games take place at Berkshire Community College.

Competition is in the following divisions: Mites (ages 6-7), midgets (ages 8-9), juniors (10-12) and seniors (13-15). Age is of Aug. 1, 1998.

Registration applications will be sent home through schools. They are also available at the Pittsfield Parks Department office at 874 North Street in Pittsfield. The application deadline is April 30.

Questions and information: League director Lance Lapointe, 447-8155.

4/5/98

Pittsfield Jr. football sign-ups today

The Pittsfield Junior Football League has scheduled registration for today from 9 a.m. to noon at the Common on First Street.

Registrations will also be accepted at the Common Monday through Friday from 6 to 7 p.m. until Aug. 15.

Children ages 8-14 are eligible and the fee is $15. A birth certificate is required at registration. Registration must be made in person.

Information: Mickey Mazza, 447-7029.

8/1/98

58.

Pittsfield Parks

June 22-26

Monday:

Clapp, Common, Deming and Pitt: Morning: icebreaker games

Afternoon: kids' choice activities.

Tuesday:

Clapp: Morning: kick the can; nature walk

Afternoon: arts and crafts; soccer relays

Deming: Morning: treasure hunt; hungry hippos

Afternoon: story time; basketball

Common: Morning: touch football; dot art

Afternoon: hopscotch; ultimate frisbee

Pitt: Morning: The blob; paper airplane races

Afternoon: nature riddles; nature walk

Wednesday:

Clapp: Morning: ultimate frisbee; home run derby

Afternoon: create a play; kite flying

Deming: Morning: arts and crafts; fire safety with Boots the Fire Dog

Afternoon: buffalo tag; frisbee golf

Common: Morning: noodle art; the blob

Afternoon: Fire safety with Boots the Fire Dog; paper airplanes

Pitt: Morning: leaf pictures; horse shoes Afternoon: kick the can; story time

Thursday:

Clapp: Morning: arts and crafts; basketball tournament

Afternoon: frisbee golf; balloon relays

Deming: Morning: kite flying, park cleanup

Afternoon: dizzy izzy; create a story

Common: Morning: soccer speedball; board games

Afternoon: coloring; wacky wiffleball

Pitt: Morning: nature walk; hospital tag

Afternoon: touch football; skin the snake

Friday:

Clapp: Morning: treasure hunt; create a dance

Afternoon: story time; capture the flag

Deming: Morning: wiffleball; wheelbarrow relays

Afternoon: ultimate frisbee; leaf pictures

6/18/98

PITTSFIELD: The Department of Community Service/ Parks and Recreation has announced that registration forms for the Special Needs Summer Recreation Program at Highland School are available at the Parks Department headquarters, 874 North St.

The four-week program, consisting of arts and crafts, educational programs, games and trips to Onota Lake, will run from July 6 through 31. Registration is open until Friday, June 19. Information: 499-9343.

6/18/98

Tuesday, June 23, 1998

Programs will be offered at the Common and at Pitt, Clapp and Deming parks, plus the Highland special needs playground.

Pittsfield playgrounds offer free activities for six weeks

By Margot M. LeSage
Eagle Correspondent

PITTSFIELD — School's out for the summer, and children can find entertaining ways to fill their days at city playgrounds. The Department of Community Services/Parks and Recreation has begun its supervised recreation and playground programs to give kids something to do and parents some peace of mind.

The free program at the First Street Common, Pitt Park, Clapp Park and Deming Park started yesterday and will run through the end of July. Activities include sports and games, arts and crafts, and special events.

The program runs Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 5 p.m. Registration is not required.

The program used to run for four weeks, but now lasts six weeks, according to Robert S. Mellace, director of community services.

"We're just trying to fill in as much of the summer as possible," Mellace said. He added that extending the program gives steady summer jobs to the two leaders at each park who help facilitate the activities.

Recreation Director John Marchesi said the supervised parks program began in 1947 and included 24 playgrounds. Although the program is now limited to four parks, he said he hopes that in the future more parks and playgrounds will be included.

"It gives them something to do," Marchesi said of the children who use the parks. "There is always something to do at the playground."

A special needs program meets at Highland School for four weeks in July. Participants need to register for the free program, which includes a

PARKS, continued on B4



Joel Librizzi / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Playing and watching a game of caroms at the Pitt Park playground in Pittsfield yesterday are, from left, Collin Gardner, 11, Billy Buckley, 13, playground leader Jason Conuel, recreation supervisor Kerri Ryan, Ronnie Simmons, 9, and Cameron Kazimierczak, 7.

6/23/98

Parks from B1

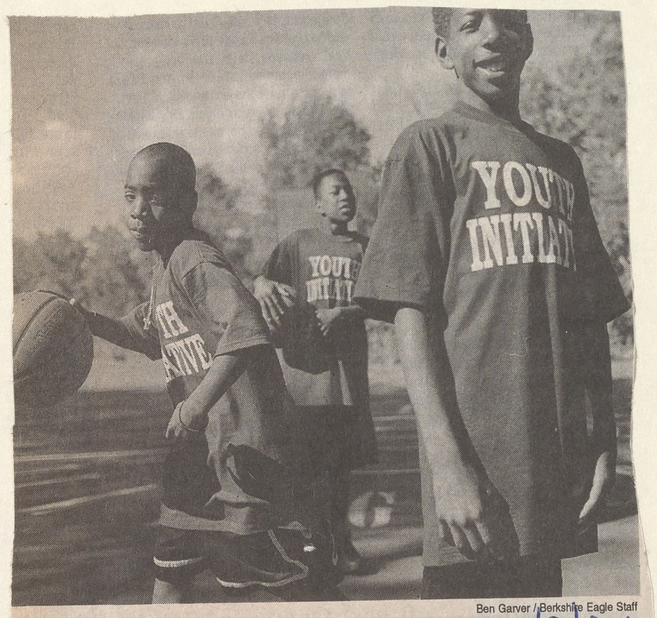
morning session of arts and crafts and games and an afternoon session of swimming at Onota Lake. Mellace said this particular program is more supervised and regimented.

Mellace estimated that at any given time each park usually has about 10 to 15 children participating in activities.

Tomorrow, "Boots" the fire dog will make appearances at Deming Park during the morning session and at the First Street Common during the afternoon.

The other activities also include kite-flying, treasure hunts, basketball and coloring. Kerri Ryan is the recreation supervisor for the program.

6/23/98



Ben Garver / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Practice at Pitt Park

Getting ready for a tournament to be held tomorrow as part of the 29th annual community reunion at Pitt Park are, from left, Gerald Jones, 11, Dominic Smith, 13, and Lance Spratling, 12. Story, Page B5.

7/3/98



The city's free supervised summer playground program is underway, offering myriad activities each weekday through July. These young artists, Joseph Ducharme, Samantha Hallock and Cindy Shuttleworth, enjoyed the Common Park on Wednesday.

6/25/98

City promotes summer park program

By Anthony Fyden

It's a summertime deal that's hard to beat.

Free, supervised, fun activities for kids at city parks nearly all summer long. As community services director Robert Mellace notes, the program is not new. In fact, it's been around for years.

"The whole idea is to get people with kids into the parks," Mellace said.

The supervised program is offered at four city parks on weekdays from June 22 through the end of July. The sites are Clapp Park on West Housatonic Street, Deming Park, Pitt Park on John Street and the Common Park on First Street.

Sessions run from 9 a.m. to noon and from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

The camp recreation supervisors took pains to create a broad variety of activities for youngsters. The list of sports and games appears to have something for everyone.

This week alone, kids could choose from kick the can, a nature walk, "hungry hippos," touch football, ul-

See PARKS page 19



Jared M. Leeds / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Pittsfield lights up

Two-year-old Kyle Strack of Pittsfield was on hand as the lights of the Park Square Christmas tree were turned on last night.

12/9/98

Pitt Park to host community reunion

Activities will include arts and crafts, sports events, movies, sleepovers and a block dance.

By Margot M. LeSage
Eagle Correspondent

PITTSFIELD — In an effort to promote more unity, the 29th annual community reunion, which begins tonight at Pitt Park, will last throughout the weekend.

Formerly known as the Gather In, the community reunion, sponsored by the Christian Center and the West Side Neighborhood Resource Center, has expanded from one day to three to allow more people in the community to partake in the fun, said Cheryl Nolan, community coordinator for the West Side Neighborhood Resource Center.

This year's event features three days of activities, including arts and crafts, sports events, movies, sleepovers, food and an old-fashioned block dance.

Dennis Powell, director of the Christian Center, said one of the main reasons for holding the event during the Fourth of July weekend is that it coincides with the downtown Fourth of July festivities, which is often one of the few times people return home to the Berkshires.

"We wanted to feel very much a part of the total community," Powell said.

Festivities will kick off tonight at 4 p.m. with "Youth Night in the Park." Kids can participate in arts and crafts, baseball and softball games as well as help adults finish float preparations.

The evening will culminate with movies and a sleepover in the park that will be chaperoned by parents and grandparents.

Powell said he developed the idea of a sleepover after spending the night at a family weekend at a camp last year. He said that some children in the neighborhood cannot afford to go to camp or have even had the opportunity to sleep outside.

Nolan said a tent has been set up in the park and that the chaperones are there not only for safety, but to make sure there is no vandalism. She said many children have already signed up for the sleepovers.

Although the focus of Friday night is on the children, Nolan said she would like to see parents attend the events as well.

On the Fourth, West Side athletes will lead the community float in the annual Fourth of July Parade. Following the parade, the public is invited to attend the events which include bands, a performance by the Step Team, horse rides, volleyball, horseshoes and the men's basketball tournament. Food and drink will also be sold.

Also Saturday, there will be an exhibition game by the West Side Neighborhood Softball League as well as a cooking demonstration by Chef Dennis Powell. The evening will end with a block dance and another sleepover for kids.

Nolan said the event is widening the traditional family picnic circle and explained that many people in the community can't afford to hold their own picnic or don't have family in the area.

"We're lending a family for those who don't have a family," Nolan said.

Sunday will feature an ecumenical service at noon, followed by basketball finals and a community barbecue at 5 p.m. The barbecue is free and families are invited to bring their favorite dish.

"We want people to come into the neighborhood that don't come into the community," Powell said. He added that the event is drug and alcohol free.

At 6:30 p.m. will be the monthly flashlight walk to symbolize keeping the neighborhood safe.

"We are getting back to improving the quality of life in the neighborhood and the community," Nolan said.

Powell said that he grew up in the West Side and back then he knew who his neighbors were, but now, after urban renewal, which he feels broke up neighborhoods, people don't even meet their neighbors.

"Projects can't replace what neighborhoods once meant," Powell said.

PITTSFIELD: The Department of Parks and Recreation has announced that next week will be the final one for the summer playground program this year. During the final week, the playgrounds will operate from 9 to noon and 1 to 5, Monday through Friday. Instead of a set schedule, the leaders have planned to conduct children's choice activities throughout the week. 7/22/98

Pittsfield sets youth football sign-up

Registration has been scheduled for the Pittsfield Junior Footbl League, co-sponsored by the Department of Community Servics/ Parks & Recreation. Sign-ups will by Saturday, Aug. 1, from 9 o noon and Monday, Aug. 3, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at the First Stret Common warming house.

Any youngster who will be 8 years old, but not more than 13, n Sept. 1 is eligible. All returning players must also register.

Tryouts will begin Aug. 4 at 6 p.m. at the Common. New candidates must attend at least half the tryouts to be selected. All candidates will be placed on a team. All players must obtain a medical waiver from a family physician in order to play. Each player will be assessed a $15 equipment fee upon registration and must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. New players must bring a birth certificate.

Players who will not be in town for the registration dates may register at the Parks & Recreation Department, 874 North St.

Information: 499-9343.

7/24/98

Halloween parade meeting set for Sept. 25

PITTSFIELD — The Department of Community Services/ Parks & Recreation announces that the first organizational meeting for the city's halloween parade has been set for Friday, Sept. 25, at 7 p.m. at the Springside House, 874 North St.

Local organizations are invited to attend the meeting if they plan to enter a float, band or marching unit.

All entries must have a theme that is halloween related and any group wishing to participate should have a representative at this meeting.

The 54th Annual Halloween Parade will be held Friday, Oct. 30, at 7 p.m.

Information: Department of Parks & Recreation at 499-9343.

9/18/98

Pittsfield Jr. football to sell tickets

The Pittsfield Junior Football League has scheduled its annual season ticket sale Saturday, Aug. 22, at 10 a.m.

All league players and coaches are scheduled to participate in the door-to-door campaign and players will be in their jerseys.

Drivers are needed and all parents and volunteers wishing to help should report to the Pittsfield Common Warming House on First Street by 9:30 a.m.

8/18/98

Halloween Parade scheduled for Oct. 30

9/18/98

PITTSFIELD — The Board of Park Commissioners has announced that the annual Halloween Parade will be held on Friday, Oct. 30, beginning at 7.

Trick-or-Treat night will be held on Saturday, Oct. 31, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Children should be accompanied by adults.

Further information may be obtained by calling the Parks & Recreation office at 499-9343.

Park Square tree lighting will be Dec. 4

Harvard University in 1920.

PITTSFIELD — The Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony in Park Square will be Friday, Dec. 4, at 7 p.m.

The event, sponsored by the Department of Community Services/Parks & Recreation, will include the Salvation Army songsters under the direction of Capt. Thomas Perks, who will lead the community singing.

This year, a 35-foot blue spruce was donated by Arthur and Rita Caropreso. The Pittsfield Highway Department provided the crane to place the tree in Park Square under the direction of Anthony C. Stracuzzi, park foreman and Thomas Grizey, director of the city's Emergency Management Agency.

The Christmas tree will be decorated by Grizey and his staff.

Santa to call Pittsfield children Dec. 14 and 15

PITTSFIELD — The Department of Community Services/ Parks & Recreation will be conducting its 17th annual North Pole Calling Program on Monday, Dec. 14, and Tuesday, Dec. 15, from 4:30 to 7.

Volunteer Santas and operators will again be making personal phone calls to Pittsfield children only.

Information sheets have been sent home with children in Kindergarten and Grades 1 and 2.

Forms are also available at the recreation office, 874 North St., and are to be returned by Friday, Dec. 11.

Last year, more than 350 children were called by Santa.

Annual Santa calls planned

The Department of Community Services/ Parks & Recreation will be conducting its 17th annual North Pole Calling Program on Monday, December 14 and Tuesday, December 15 from 4:30-7 p.m.

Volunteer Santas and operators make personal phone calls to Pittsfield children.

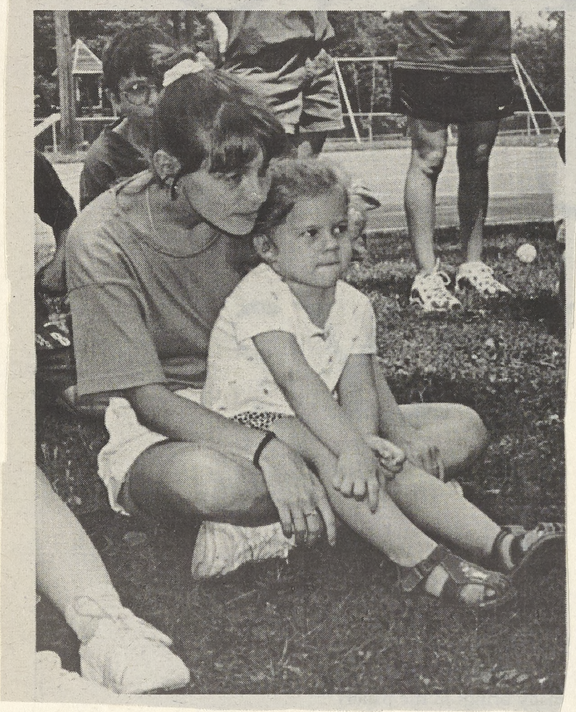
Information sheets have been sent home with children in kindergarten and Grades 1 & 2. Forms are also available at the city park office, 874 North Street. Forms must be returned by Friday, December 11.

In 1997 more than 350 children were called by "Santa."

12/3/98

Parks program provides informal supervised activities





The parks department's free summer playground program offers a host of activities. On Wednesday, kids at Deming and the Common parks learned about fire prevention. The firefighters brought along the robotic "Boots the Fire Dog" to help make their point.

continued from page 1

timate frisbee, arts & crafts, frisbee golf, capture the flag, kite flying, home run derby, soccer speedball, hopscotch, story time, whiffleballs, wheelbarrow relays, basketball, create a story, leaf pictures and horse shoes.

Although supervised, the sessions are informal and kids can participate in the activities they enjoy or play on their own.

"We want kids to come to the park and have a lot of fun," said Kerry Ryan, recreation supervisor.

The Springfield College student said that activities were designed to appeal to a range of ages and skill levels. "Not everything is competitive," she said. "It's not all based on winning."

Mellace noted that the program this year was expanded from four to six weeks. Although the program has been around for many years — more than 50 years, in fact — many parents don't seem to know it exists. "People think this is something new we're doing," Mellace said.

In addition to keeping dozens of kids busy for much of the summer, the program provides an active summer job for eight supervisors; two counselors at each park.

Ryan, who has an interest in physical education, said the job sounded ideal to her; she gets to spend most of her time outside and being active. "I just like to see the kids out there having fun," she said.

The only drawback was the extensive time spent at a desk designing the program, she said.

But now, the supervisors, along with the youngsters, have begun the fun. At the Common Park on Wednesday, a group of kids enjoyed the steamy weather with activities named "the blob" and "noodle art."

After lunch, two members of the Pittsfield Fire Department's fire safety team visited the group.

The parks department group was joined by a large group of students from the city Head Start program.

The firefighters talked about the danger of playing with matches and how to react to a fire — and quickly had a number of volunteers rolling in the grass and crawling around to escape the imaginary smoke.

In addition to the supervised program at Clapp, Deming, Pitt and the Common Park, the parks department offers a program for special needs students at Highland School during July. Although still free, the special needs camp requires registration. For more information, call the parks department at 499-9343.

Annual community reunion to take place at Pitt Park

The 29th annual community reunion sponsored by the Westside Neighborhood Resource Center and the Christian Center, will be held this year on July 3, 4 and 5 at Pitt Park.

This year's event will feature sports, arts and crafts, movies, sleepovers, musical entertainment, food and drink, and an old-fashioned block dance. The public is invited and transportation will be provided on Saturday from North Street to Pitt Park.

Festivities will begin Friday night, July 3, at 4 with "Youth Night in the Park." Basketball and softball games will be featured, and the evening will culminate with movies and a sleepover in the park chaperoned by parents and grandparents.

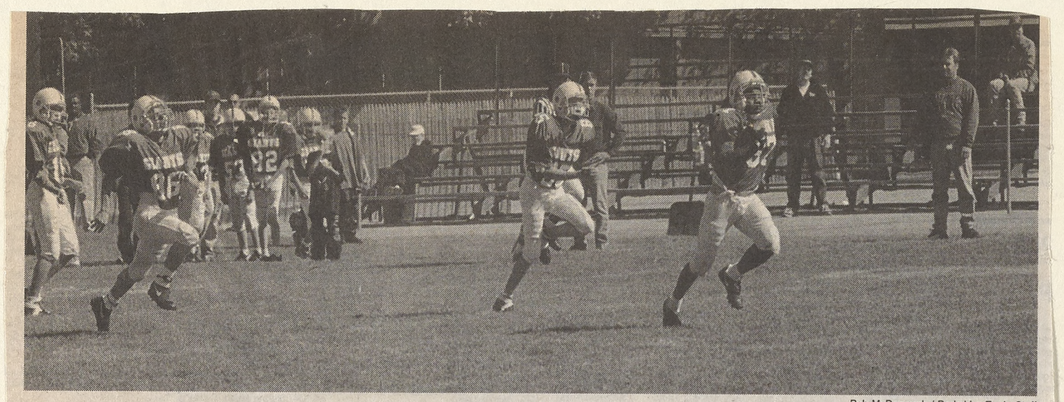
The 4th of July Parade will be featured on the second day with West Side athletes leading the community float. Saturday's events will include bands, a performance by the Step Team and horse rides.

There will be an exhibition game by the West Side Neighborhood Softball League and a special cooking demonstration by Chef Dennis Powell. The evening will culminate with an old-fashioned block dance and another sleepover for youth.

At noon on Sunday, there will be an ecumenical service with participation by community churches.

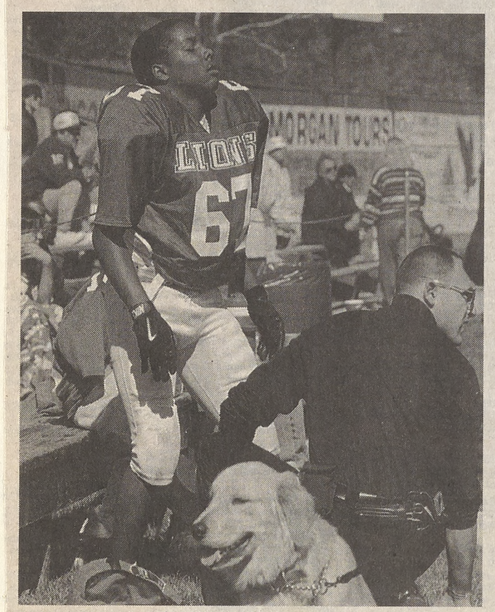
The event will culminate with a community flashlight march at 6:30 meant to symbolize the neighborhood safe and drug free.

6/29/98



Bob McDonough / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Off and running again, Lions' E.J. Jones, right, outruns tacklers for a 60-yard touchdown yesterday against the Giants in Pittsfield Junior Football action. It was his ninth touchdown run of 50 yards or more this season.



Bob McDonough / Berkshire Eagle Staff

No pain, no gain? E.J. Jones had both yesterday. Here, he gets medical attention for a hip injury that sidelined him in the second half.

'It takes away a lot from our lineup when he's not in there. It's like a cannon waiting to go off.'

— Lions coach Lou Bologna

E.J.: The extra jolt

Pittsfield Jr. Football speedster Jones makes habit of long touchdown runs

By Dan Arkans
Special to The Eagle

PITTSFIELD — For four years, E.J. Jones' mother has not watched her son play football more than a couple of times.

It's not that she's an unsupportive mother. Quite the contrary. But she can't stand to watch her son take the physical abuse he endures on a regular basis for the Greylock Credit Union Lions of the Pittsfield Junior Football League.

It's a good thing she skipped yesterday afternoon's battle with the Tahiti Takeout Giants. After giving the Lions an 18-14 lead with a 60-yard touchdown run, his second score of the day, Jones pulled a muscle in his hip and missed the fourth quarter.

While Jones limped on the sideline, the Lions limped onto the field without him, coming up short in a battle of the unbeatens, 28-18.

"My mom doesn't want me to play at all," said Jones. "She's worried about the injuries, me getting hurt."

On the ensuing kick after Jones' touchdown jaunt, the Giants returned it for a touchdown and never looked back.

"It takes away a lot from our lineup when he's not in there," said Lions coach Lou Bologna of Jones' absence. "It's like a cannon waiting to go off. But they played exceptional defense. In fact, it's the first time in about six games where I've actually seen a team tackle him and swallow him up like that."

Next star for Taconic?

The 13-year-old Jones, who will attend Taconic High School after he finishes at Reid Middle School, continued his dominance of the league with 150 yards rushing on just 13 carries in a little over a half, including two more touchdowns to give him 11 in three weeks of action.

In the previous two weeks, he had touchdown runs of 72, 62, 58 and 64 yards in a 36-18 win, and runs of 48, 38, 69, 55 and 55 yards in a 44-0 victory.

He also made three impressive open-field tackles yesterday from his safety position.

Not the only go-to guy

Almost every team in the Pittsfield Junior Football league has a go-to-guy and that's certainly Jones for the Lions.

For Tahiti, it was Huck Correia and on this day, Correia had the last laugh. He ran for touchdowns of 38 and 5 yards, plus a pair of conversions, while teammate Darrell Davila broke a 60-yard touchdown run and Matt Weller added another short TD run.

However, you get the feeling

JONES, continued on C3

10/5/98



Bob McDonough / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Darrell Davila (87) escapes for a long gain yesterday at Wahconah Park. He also had a 60-yard touchdown in the Giants' 28-18 win over the Lions.

Jones from C1

that when these two teams meet again in the final game of the regular season Oct. 25, most likely the league championship will hang in the balance.

"It was frustrating," said Jones of watching the final quarter on the sideline. "We had some other guys injured but I thought we'd pick it up and win."

Latest of many stars

Jones is the latest in the long line of impressive athletes who have gone through the Pittsfield Junior Football League, an 8-team league.

Other great ones included Dale Phelps (middle linebacker at Trinity), Larry King (former Syracuse running back), Mark Palmer and Luis Hoose (quarterback and running back at Pittsfield High) and Derek Jones (running back at St. Joe's).

"E.J. has terrific speed," said Bologna. "Once he gets to the outside or the secondary, he is hard to catch. Not only that, but he is hard to tackle, too. He's not afraid of contact."

When Jones was healthy yesterday, he controlled the action for the Lions. He opened the game with a 55-yard touchdown sprint to put Greylock up 6-0 on its first possession.

However, a more telling play came in a tough, bruising 10-yard gain on a 4th-and-5 situation where he carried several defenders with him to the Giants' 3. The Lions scored on the next play.

"His strength is his natural ability to know where the football is," said Bologna. "When he's running with the ball, he just seems to make the right moves all the time. He makes the correct cuts. His vision must be very good because he always sees kids coming at him. I see a lot of kids when they get into the secondary, they don't see kids coming at them from behind or the side of them, but E.J. seems to see them all."

10/5/98



Craig F. Walker / Berkshire Eagle Staff

2/7/98

Chipping away

Ryan Gooch of the Pittsfield Parks Department clears some ice recently from the Onota Lake dam for upcoming renovation work.

PITTSFIELD: The north parking lot at Burbank Park, and the road leading to the lot, will be closed until the end of the fall construction season, city officials said yesterday.

In addition, the parking lot serving the boat ramp and fishing pier will be closed on Monday and Tuesday for paving, weather permitting. 11/5/98

Burbank Park concession bids sought by city

PITTSFIELD — The city is seeking bids for a summer concession stand operation at Burbank Park at Onota Lake, city Purchasing Agent Robert B. Tone Jr. and Director of Community Services Robert S. Mellace have announced.

In the past, the city has invited interested parties to bid for the right to sell snacks and beverages at the stand in the bathhouse, at the north beach. However, last year there were no bidders on the concession, and officials are hoping to revive the stand for the coming summer.

Bids are due in Tone's office in City Hall by 2 p.m. on Tuesday, April 21. 3/31/98

Onota Lake to be refilled starting next week

3/13/98

PITTSFIELD — The refilling of Onota Lake will commence next week. It is anticipated the lake will be refilled by April 10, depending upon weather conditions.

The refilling of the lake may have an impact on the current ice conditions and users of the lake have been reminded by the Department of Parks and Recreation to use caution before venturing onto the ice.

The refill dates are determined by the an order of conditions, issued by the Conservation Commission. Refilling of the lake is overseen by the Department of Community Services/Parks and Recreation.

Burbank Park renovations begin without new restrooms

Construction has begun on the Burbank Park refurbishment, but new restrooms are not part of the plan.

Parks commissioners on Monday received an update on the park revitalization project from community services director Robert Mellace. He told the board that budget constraints prohibited including new bathrooms at this time.

"I don't know when we're going to be able to afford this in the future," Mellace said.

The news did not sit well with parks commissioners, who agreed that restrooms are a key part of an appealing recreation area.

"If we want an A-1 facility down there, we've got to have bathrooms," said commissioner Ben Kaplan. "This is stupid."

Mellace proposed an option of expanding the parking lot to encompass the area where the pavilion and bathroom had been planned — on the now grassy area on the park's north side. But the board decided to leave the area untouched in hopes that the city will soon come through with funding.

Commission chairman Cliff Nilan said that officials should quickly develop a plan for funding the pavilion as part of the refurbishment project. "I think we ought to move on this now," he said.

Work on the park began about two weeks ago. 10/22/98

Events at Wild Acres kick off a busy fishing derby season

It's fishing derby time again. The annual events sponsored by Friends of Wild Acres and Pittsfield Department of Community Services/Parks and Recreation began yesterday with the derby for youngsters ages 6-14. And it continues today from 7 to 7 at the popular outdoor recreation area off South Mountain Road, Pittsfield.

From Tuesday to Friday, 6 a.m. to 7 p.m., seniors will get their chance to fish for stocked hatchery trout. Also, they will have a second opportunity to fish on Monday through Friday, May 18-22 at the same hours.

On Sunday, May 17, Friends of the Berkshire Arc will take over the pond and facilities for their annual derby for persons with disabilities. Hours are 9 to 4. There will be prizes and hamburgers and plenty of free hot dogs, hamburgers, and soda for the participants.

Wild Acres was closed all day for stocking May 1 and will be again tomorrow and on Saturday, May 14. Year-round fishing at Wild Acres is restricted to children ages 6-14.



Photos by Ben Garver / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Kevin Dewitt is the coach, and his son Kaleb, 2, is fast asleep.

West Side reunion has park hopping

By Margot M. LeSage
Eagle Correspondent

PITTSFIELD — Jerome Spratling was sleeping outside for the first time in his life and, boy, was he excited.

"I'm going to bring lots of stuff, like food and toys," Spratling, 9, said.

Spratling was just one of many who will be attending the 29th annual community reunion that began yesterday afternoon at Pitt Park. Events continue today and tomorrow.

Waiting his turn to play in the basketball tournament, Spratling talked of how much he liked basketball and how he was marching with the West Side athletes in the parade today.

Sponsored by the Christian Center and the West Side Neighborhood Resource Center, the community reunion, formerly known as the Gather In, has been expanded to allow more people in the community to partake in the activities. Also, this is the first time the event coincides with the Fourth of July, a holiday that brings many family and friends back to the area.

The theme of yesterday's event was "Youth Night in the Park," and kids were busy playing basketball and softball, decorating the float in festive red, white and blue for the parade, and watching movies. The evening ended with a sleepover in Pitt Park.

"Our youth is so important to us," said Cheryl Nolan, community coordinator for the West Side Neighborhood Resource Center. She said she hopes the weekend stresses the importance of "going back to family values."

Bicycles lined the edges of the

REUNION, continued on B5

7/4/98



Rollin Whitley, 4, and Moneja Stovall, 2½, stroll Pitt Park.

Reunion from B1

park, abandoned by children who were playing basketball or softball or visiting with friends. At the softball field, Manny Slaughter, director of the neighborhood's sports program, was practicing with would-be major leaguers.

Jackie Stevens was assisting Nolan in distributing T-shirts for the community softball game yesterday. Stevens' two sons are participating in the sporting events this weekend.

"I think it's great because it's trying to bring the community together," Stevens said of the reunion.

Marjorie Moody returned to Pittsfield from Savannah, Ga., to attend the reunion with her family, who still live in the area. She said she makes it a point to make it back North to attend the reunions.

Yesterday, while watching her grandson Dominique Smith run up and down the court under the supervision of Leroy Jones, Moody said wistfully, "This is our future."

"I think it is an important event for young black kids," she said. "The community is able to see that there is more about these kids than drugs— they are really creative young people."

Faith Harrington and her husband, Charles, were planning on attending the sleepover last night with their four children. Though she knew she probably wouldn't be getting much sleep, she still looked forward to the evening.

"I think all families should get involved and do something with their kids," Harrington said. She added that the event helps to keep kids off the streets and do something constructive.

Harrington, who recently moved to the neighborhood from across town, said she thinks the support in the community is wonderful. She said two of her children play basketball on the youth league and her daughter Felicity was chosen to ride on the float in the parade.

"It brings new meaning to the word community, and I'm proud to be a part of it," Harrington said.

Today West Side athletes will lead the community float in the annual Fourth of July Parade. Following the parade, the public is invited to attend events, which include a performance by the Step Team, bands, horse rides, volleyball, horseshoes and the men's basketball tournament. Food and drink also will be sold.

Also today, there will be an exhibition game by the West Side Neighborhood Softball League and a cooking demonstration by Chef Dennis Powell. The evening will end with a block dance and another sleepover for kids.

Tomorrow an ecumenical service will be held at noon, followed by basketball finals and a community barbecue at 5. The barbecue is free and families are invited to bring their favorite dish.

At 6:30 p.m. there will be a flashlight walk to symbolize keeping the neighborhood safe.

"I do think people need to take a little more time to get to know their neighbors," Nolan said.

Meeting set to organize 1998 Halloween parade

A planning meeting for groups interested in participating in this year's Halloween Parade will be held Friday, September 25 at 7 p.m. at Springside House.

The parks department has announced that the annual Halloween Parade will be held on Friday, October 30 at 7 p.m.

"Trick-Or-Treat" night will be held on Saturday, October 31 from 5:30-7 p.m.

9/24/98

54th Halloween Parade set for Friday night in Pittsfield

10/8/98

PITTSFIELD — The city's 54th annual Halloween Parade will step off at 7 p.m. Friday.

Organizers said that marching units will line up on the south side of East Street facing Park Square no later than 6:30. Floats and vehicles are to line up on the north side of East Street facing Park Square no later than 6:30.

The line of march for this year's parade consists of 17 floats and vehicles, three marching bands and 12 schools and marching units. The parade begins on East Street and passes through Park Square onto North Street, where the reviewing stand is situated. It ends on Wahconah Street.

Prizes to be awarded

Judges will award three prizes to floats and three prizes to bands: first prize is $150, second is $125 and third is $100.

In addition, 25 individual award gift certificates will be presented to children marching in the parade.

Selection of award winners will be made prior to the parade by judges stationed in the lineup area. Costume award winners will be given ribbons to wear on their costumes.

Prizes can be redeemed with the back portions of the ribbons at the Department of Parks and Recreation, 874 North St., which sponsors the parade in conjunction with the city's Department of Community Services.

The line of march follows.

Section I — Corner of First and East streets to Bartlett Avenue:

1. Pittsfield Police cruiser
2. Parks & Recreation Department vehicle
3. VFW Post 448 Color Guard
4. Halloween Parade Grand Marshall Sheriff Carmen C. Massimiano
5. Berkshire County House of Correction float and marchers
6. Pittsfield Fire Truck and Sparky
7. Pittsfield Winter Carnival Queen

Section II — Bartlett Avenue to Pomeroy Avenue:

8. Eagles Band
9. Allendale School float
10. Allendale School marchers
11. WUPE van
12. BTEP Mobile Unit float
13. Crosby School marchers
14. Stearns School float
15. Stearns School marchers

Section III — Pomeroy Avenue to Pittsfield High School driveway:

16. Pittsfield High School band
17. Pittsfield High School Color Guard
18. Pittsfield High School Cheerleaders
19. Egremont School float
20. Egremont School marchers
21. School bus — handicap children float
22. Highland School marchers
23. Miller's Petroleum System float
24. Williams School marchers

Section IV — Pittsfield High School driveway to Appleton Avenue:

25. Taconic High School Band
26. WBEC float
27. K-B Toys float
28. Mr. K-B
29. K-B Toys marchers
30. Morningside School marchers
31. Pittsfield 4th of July Parade Committee float
32. Pittsfield Police cruiser

Final meeting set to plan parade

PITTSFIELD — The Department of Community Services/ Parks & Recreation has announced that the last organizational meeting for the Halloween Parade will be Monday at 7 p.m. at Springside House, 874 North St.

Local organizations are invited to attend the meeting if they plan to enter a float, band or marching unit.

All entries must have a Halloween-related theme and any group wishing to participate is asked to have a representative at the meeting, the announcement said.

Groups interested in further information may call the Department of Parks & Recreation at 499-9343.

The 54th annual Halloween Parade will be Friday, Oct. 30, at 7 p.m. 10/23/98

Girls Inc. hosting annual Halloween party

PITTSFIELD — Girls Incorporated will hold its annual Halloween party this Tuesday from 6:30 to 8. The party will begin with the grand march in the gymnasium, which will be followed by costume judging.

There will be prizes awarded for the funniest, scariest, most original, and most like Halloween. Other activities will include pin the nose on the pumpkin, musical chairs, face painting, and a haunted house hosted by the PreTeen and Teen groups at the center. Refreshments will be served following the festivities.

The Pittsfield Department of Parks and Recreation is co-sponsoring the event this year, which is open to the public. The party is for children in Kindergarten through Grade 7. Tickets are $1 and should be purchased in advance as space is limited.

Information: Girls Inc. at 442-5174. 10/26/98

Meeting planned to organize annual Halloween parade

PITTSFIELD — The Department of Community Services/ Parks & Recreation has announced that the second organizational meeting for the city's Halloween parade has been set for this Friday at 7 at the Springside House, 874 North St.

Local organizations planning to enter a float, band or marching unit are invited to attend.

All entries must have a theme that is Halloween related and any group wishing to participate should have a representative at the meeting.

Further information may be obtained by calling the Department of Parks & Recreation at 499-9343.

The 54th annual Halloween parade will be held on Friday, Oct. 30,at 7 p.m.

The parade is sponsored by the Department of Parks & Recreation. 10/6/98

Congratulations to the person or people who decided to have trick or treat on Saturday night this year. Please let's do this every year. As a parent, I am excited because my children do not have to get up for school in the morning. As a school-teacher, I am excited because my students will not show up to the classroom tired and sugared up. 10/23/98

Eagles Band plans summer concerts

2/12/98

The Eagles Band will once again offer a series of free summer concerts at Springside Park.

The band's three-concert series earned parks commission approval Monday."These concerts were a great benefit to Springside Park," said commissioner Cliff Nilan.

According to Eagles Band publicist Diane Nichols, the 1998 concerts are scheduled for June 30, July 14 and July 28. The concerts will begin at 7 p.m. Attendees will be encouraged to bring lawn chairs or blankets.

The band will also sell light refreshments during this year's concerts to help defray expenses.

Easter egg hunt to be hosted by Boys' & Girls' Club

PITTSFIELD — The Boys' and Girls' Club of Pittsfield will host the annual Easter egg hunt on Saturday, April 11.

Children ages 2 and 3, and 6 and 7 will begin the hunt at 1; ages 4 and 5, and 8 and 9, will begin their hunt at 1:45.

Age divisions will search in the following locations: 2-and 3-year-olds and 4- and 5-year-olds, gym; 6- and 7-year-olds and 8- and 9-year-olds, ice rink. Participants should bring their own bag.

Prizes in each division will be awarded for the following color of egg found: purple, yellow, blue, green and orange.

Sponsors are Pittsfield Exchange Club, Boys' and Girls' Club and Department of Community Services/Parks and Recreation. 3/27/98

Easter egg hunt slated for April 11 in Pittsfield

3/30/98

PITTSFIELD — The Department of Parks & Recreation has announced that the 1998 annual Easter egg hunt will be held on Saturday, April 11, at the Pittsfield Boys & Girls Club on Melville Street.

The event, which is open to Pittsfield residents only, is co-sponsored by the Pittsfield Exchange Club, Boys & Girls Club and the Department of Parks & Recreation.

The hunt will start at 1 in the gym for boys and girls ages 2 and 3, and at the ice rink for ages 6 and 7.

The second set will start at 1:45 with ages 4 and 5 in the gym and 8 and 9 at the ice rink.

Participants are asked to use the front entrance of the club. Children should bring their own bags or baskets.

Information: the Department of Parks & Recreation at 499-9343.

Easter egg hunt begins at 1 p.m.

The city's annual Easter egg hunt will be held Saturday at the Boys' & Girls' Club on Melville Street.The free event is sponsored by the Pittsfield Exchange Club and Parks Department.

The hunt starts at 1 p.m. for boys and girls ages 2 & 3 in the gym and for boys and girls ages 6 & 7 at the ice rink. The hunt starts at 1:45 p.m. for ages 4 & 5 in the gym and for ages 8 & 9 in the ice rink.

Children should bring their own bags or baskets. As the actual hunts last only for a few minutes, children should arrive on time. 4/9/98



Joel Librizzi / Berkshire Eagle Staff

City workers erect temporary fencing to keep Fourth of July Parade spectators out of Park Square, where the reviewing stand and television crews will be located. 7/2/98



Joel Librizzi / Berkshire Eagle Staff

11/25/98

Holiday arrival

Workers from the Pittsfield Department of Parks and Recreation hoist a 35-foot blue spruce into place at Park Square yesterday. The Christmas tree was donated to the city by Arthur and Rita Caropreso of Anita Drive.



Jared M. Leeds / Berkshire Eagle Staff

10/31/98

Spectacle on North Street

Deanna Fraher, a trombonist for the Eagles Band, marches through downtown Pittsfield last night in the city's 54th annual Halloween Parade. A crowd estimated at 13,000 viewed the parade, which featured 17 floats and vehicles, three bands and costumed marchers from 12 schools. Story, another photo, Page B1.



Jared Leeds / Berkshire Eagle Sta

Sheriff Carmen Massimiano, decked out as a giant rabbit, greets children on the House of Correction's 'Halloween in Tele-Tubby Land' float before the start of the parade last night.

10/31/98

Parade of ghouls

13,000 see city's 54th annual Halloween march

By Tony Dobrowolski
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — Ghouls, ghosts, goblins and several other costumed folks were accompanied by marching bands and floats last night as the 54th annual Halloween Parade shook, rattled and rolled its way through the downtown area.

Cold temperatures and windy conditions were not a deterrent; recreation director John C. Marchesi said police estimated the crowd at 13,000. That is about 1,000 more than last year, when the parade took place in mild, dry weather.

A total of 17 floats and vehicles, three marching bands, and marching units from 12 city schools participated in the parade, which began on East Street and passed through Park Square to North Street, where the reviewing stand was located. The parade finished on Wahconah Street.

Besides the usual gaggle of ghosts, witches and skeletons, participants came dressed in costumes ranging from Bart Simpson to Spiderman. Matthew Vewinkeller of Pittsfield took a more original approach. Wearing a cloth tunic with colored bits of fabric sewed on it, Vewinkeller said he was supposed to be a piece of pizza.

"His grandmother made it for him," said Rhonda Vewinkeller, Matthew's mother.

Pittsfield Police also got in on the fun. One bike-riding patrolman was seen wearing a skeleton mask.

Spectators appeared to enjoy the show, even those who hadn't attended the parade for a while.

"When I was a kid, I got scared," said Randy Wroblewski of Pittsfield, who said he was attending the parade for the first time since the mid-1970s. "They had a 'Planet of the Apes' float and they threw me in a cage. I was mortified. I don't know if I didn't come back all these years because of that or what."

Egremont Elementary School won the float competition for the second straight year. The school's entry was titled "Ship of Screams" and featured a boat modeled on the Titanic running into an iceberg. Youngsters dressed as skeletons peered from holes in the iceberg. Egremont Principal Carol McHugh sat on the top of the

PARADE, continued on B5

■ **Parade** from B1

iceberg and waved as the float moved slowly down the street with the Celine Dion song "My Heart Will Go On" playing in the background.

Allendale School finished second with a float titled "Haunted Pirate Ship." Morningside School/K-B Toys placed third with their float, "Happy Halloween."

In the band competition, the Taconic High School band placed first, with Pittsfield High School second and the Eagles Band third.

In both the float and band competitions, first-place winners received $150. Second place in both competitions earned $100, while each third-place finisher received $75.

Judges also awarded 25 gift certificates for individual costumes. Marchesi said the gift certificates would be given out in a couple of weeks.

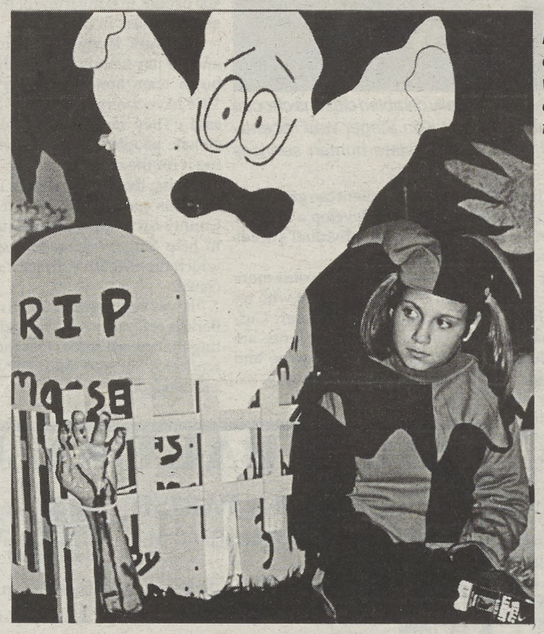
10/31/98

SPOOKY STROLL

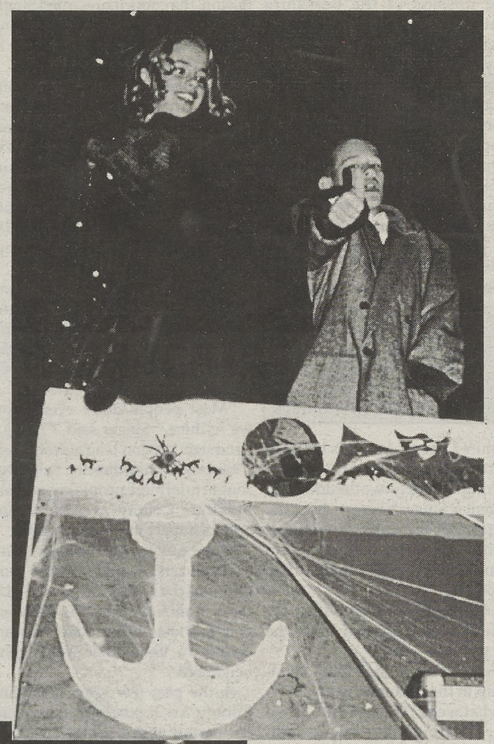
Young ghosts and goblins took over downtown Pittsfield during Friday's Halloween parade.



Stearns School students enjoyed "Halloween on the Farm" on the Lebanon Avenue school's float.



Participating in the Halloween parade can be fun, but waiting for the early evening event to begin tests youngsters' patience.





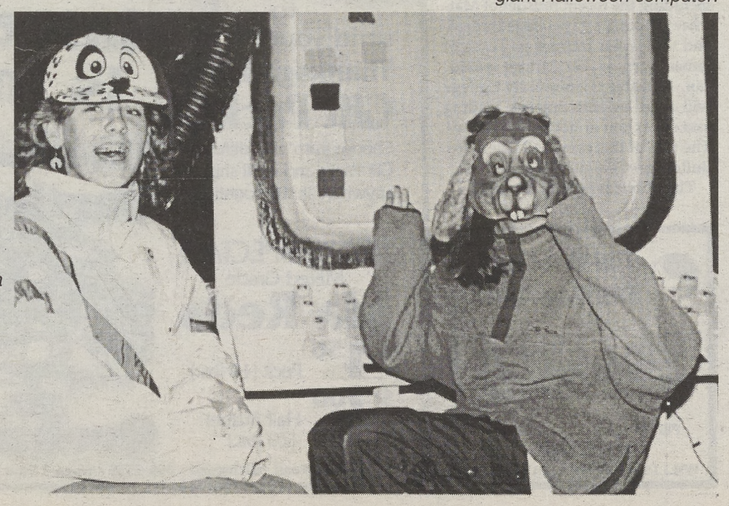
Nautical themes were big during this year's parade, including pirate ships (at left) and Egremont School's version of the film hit, "Titanic" (above).



Marching bands from Taconic and Pittsfield high schools provided music for Friday's event.

At left, PHS students Laura Melanson and Jon Gottung get ready for action.

Finding organizations to sponsor floats is becoming more difficult each year. Miller's Petroleum System answered the call this year with an imaginative float featuring costumed characters and a giant Halloween computer.





Photos by Jared Leeds / Berkshire Eagle Staf

Brandon Johnson, 6, shows good form and determi nation, with eyes kept on the quarry.

The great egg rush of '98



Four-year-old Austin Martin motors in search of another egg.

By Greg Sukiennik
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — Four-year-old Austin E. Martin had a plan, and a determined look in his eyes.

Yesterday afternoon, Austin stood at the baseline of the center basketball court at the Boys' and Girls' Club. Near center court was a purple egg — one of five prize eggs available in each round of yesterday's annual Easter Egg Hunt.

Between him and the egg was an invisible straight line.

For a week, Austin had been looking forward to yesterday's hunt.

"He's a competitor. He's been talking about it all week," said his mother, Tammy Martin.

Austin was one of hundreds of young children who participated in yesterday's egg hunt, sponsored by the city Department of Community Services/Parks and Recreation, the Boys' and Girls' Club and the Pittsfield Exchange Club. All four age divisions competed in the gym.

What was Austin's egg hunt strategy? "Run," he said, "and find the [egg] with the stamp."

Austin said he intended to collect "a lot" of the jelly bean-filled eggs. How many eggs make a lot? "A hundred,"

EGGS, continued on B5

4/12/98

Eggs from B1

he explained.

Finally, the moment came. Recreation Director John Marchese counted "One, two, three," and 4- and 5-year-old youngsters thundered onto the basketball court at breakneck speed. Plastic eggs and jelly beans skittered across the gym floor in all directions.

Towards the purple egg Austin ran, not stopping to gather any of the other brightly colored eggs that lay in his path.

But just as he reached his quarry, a young girl who had apparently dreamt up the very same strategy swooped in and grabbed the purple egg.

Still, Austin didn't hesitate, but continued running, gathering eggs and shoveling them into the New England Candle shopping bag in his left hand.

Less than a minute later, it was all over, and despite coming so close to his goal, Austin wasn't visibly disappointed. He had collected five eggs.

Six-year-old Brandon Johnson had a similar experience, except that he wasn't honed in on one of the prize eggs. He bolted onto the floor when the 6- and 7-year-old round began, keeping his head down and his eyes on the plastic eggs in front of him. When it was over, Brandon had bagged nine eggs — not bad for a first-time hunter.

The first round of the egg hunt was slightly more chaotic. Before Marchese started the hunt, a few youngsters took some initiative and started onto the gym floor. That drew pleas from Marchese, who repeatedly reminded parents that this event was for their children, not them.

Some of the 2- and 3-year-old contestants did quite well for themselves. Kiana Pierce, 3, bagged 14 eggs. "She did a good job," said her mother, Karen Pierce. "I told her about [the hunt] yesterday, and she's been ready since 10 this morning."

Not all the 2- and 3-year-olds were so assertive. A number wandered about the floor as the hunt began, causing their parents to ignore Marchese's warning and rush onto the playing surface to help their youngsters come away with a prize.

For those who did find one of the special prize eggs — there were a total of 20 among nearly 3,000 eggs — prizes included a stuffed rabbit and chocolate candy.

Denzel Moody, at 5 years old an Easter Egg Hunt veteran, knew the thrill of victory. He secured a blue egg and won the prize, and afterward he approached a reporter and photographer with a wide, proud smile to tell them what he had won.

The winners were:

Ages 2 and 3: Dominic Pompi, Maggie Ruderman, Jessica McDermott, Hannah Shaneberger, Alexander Colvin

Ages 4 and 5: McKenzie Evangelisto, Marcus Benoit, Brandon Cassella, Denzel Moody, Nicholas Duclos.

Ages 6 and 7: Christina LaCross, Brian Yuknis, John Wilker, Ian Hunt, Nicolas Avanzato.

Ages 8 and 9: Octavia Frye, Trever Pemble, Sean Ruderman, Shantale Johnson, Joshua Pinard.

Pontoosuc will again have portable facilities

By D.R. Bahlman
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — The Park Commission has agreed to investigate options for installing permanent bathroom facilities at Pontoosuc Lake.

However, since any construction of restroom facilities at the lake will probably not occur for at least another year, the commission agreed to make portable toilets available again this summer.

Park Commission Chairman Robert J. Smith said that he has had informal discussions with a representative of Krofta Engineering of Lenox, and learned that grant funding is available to pay a portion of the costs associated with installation of a "compact clarifier," a device which Smith said treats waste water. The clarifier could be connected to a sanitary system at the lake.

The commission agreed to invite Krofta's representative, former Pittsfield Mayor Charles H. Smith, to a future meeting to discuss the idea further.

Councilor at large James M. Boyle urged the commission to give the matter of restrooms at the lake high priority, and proposed that at least one permanent facility be constructed using funds available in the city's capital outlay budget.

Park Commission member Clifford J. Nilan agreed, but noted that a plan should be developed prior to any construction. He suggested that public meetings be held to help determine where bathroom facilities would best be situated.

In other business, the commission approved an agreement reached with General Electric Co. concerning Dorothy Amos Park, which was closed last summer after tests confirmed the presence of unacceptable levels of PCBs.

GE has agreed to provide additional lighting at Pitt Park and the Common at no cost to the city.

5/12/98

Public beach open at Onota's Burbank Park

PITTSFIELD — The Department of Parks and Recreation has announced the public beach at Burbank Park at Onota Lake is now open.

The beach will be staffed by lifeguards between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. seven days a week, Director of Community Services Robert S. Mellace said.

Burbank Park, accessible from the Valentine Road side of Lakeway Drive, is open from sunrise to sunset. Park security staff the park from noon to 8:30 p.m.

6/23/98

The Pittsfield Gazette February 12, 1998

Parks board explores options for Pontoosuc Lake beach restrooms

Park commissioners on Monday delayed action regarding the lack of restrooms near Pontoosuc Lake beach areas.

Commissioners have grappled with the issue for the past two years.

City councilor James Boyle wants the commission to go ahead with plans for a single restroom facility at the Hancock Road side of the beach. Some commissioners, however, are unsure whether restrooms should be located on the North Street "muscle beach" area.

"It's been three or four years people have been waiting for this," said Boyle. "It's in the best overall interests of the city and the lake to go ahead."

Chairman Bob Smith said restrooms must be a priority but he wants plans to include facilities for both beach areas.

"If we're going to do it and this is going to be a permanent facility, it should be on both sides," said Smith.

The chairman said he recently spoke with former Mayor Charles Smith, who now works for Krofta Engineering. The chairman said that the former mayor indicated it might be possible to use Pontoosuc Lake as a test site for new Krofta-designed facilities.

These special "compact clarifier" restrooms might be available free of charge. Furthermore, grants might be available to cover installation costs.

Commission member Cliff Nilan said that such options need to be explored. In the interim, Nilan said that temporary restrooms are essential.

"This year we should proceed with the port-a-potties on both sides," said Nilan. "We have yet to determine which is the better side if we're only dcing one permanent facility."

City councilor Rick Scapin disagreed, saying that the city should use some $100,000 in capital funds to proceed with a single permanent restroom.

"If we lay low and don't pursue this, we'll be right back here next year," said Scapin.

Commissioner Anthony Massimiano said that regardless of what long term goals are prioritized, "we're going to have to go with the portables this year and should makes appropriate plans."

Boyle said that the time to wait has passed. "We should at least build one," he said, "at least then we know we have one good facility."

The city councilor believes that a single restroom could serve both beaches if the city constructed a bridge to connect them.

Nilan said that the city should pursue portable restrooms for this summer, monitor use and hold hearings to see where people would place permanent facilities.

Restrooms are needed, said Nilan, but since the parks department has limited funds, any permanent plan should be weighed carefully.

Commissioners decided to table any action.

Former mayor Smith will be invited to the next commission meeting to discuss the Krofta option.



Joel Librizzi / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Beating the heat

As temperatures rose into the 80s yesterday, the public beach at Pontoosuc Lake was a popular destination. More hot weather is forecast for today, with scattered showers and thundershowers expected this afternoon and tonight.

6/23/98

The Pittsfield Gazette September 24, 1998

Designs will be sought for Pontoosuc restrooms

The long-delayed new restrooms for the public beach at Pontoosuc Lake finally moved forward Monday.

The park commission voted unanimously to solicit quotes for the design of a permanent restroom facility.

City councilor James Boyle, who has pursued the issue for several years, welcomed the action.

"I'd like to see this group move forward," said Boyle. "I hope we have something in place for next summer."

The city has earmarked up to $100,000 in the capital budget for a restroom and related upgrades, noted Boyle.

The commission has held off on the project in part because of uncertainty over whether the new restroom should be placed on the Hancock Road side of the beach or the North Street ("Muscle Beach") side. Portable facilities were installed this year.

Community services director Bob Mellace reported that an attendance count this summer showed more beach-goers — as well as boaters and picnickers — on the Hancock Road side.

"This year it seemed to be the side of favor," said parks commission chairman Cliff Nilan.

Commission member Robert Smith wants the restroom fast-tracked, but also expressed hope that the funds can be used for more than just a bathroom.

"Let's try to get the most bang for our bucks," said Smith.

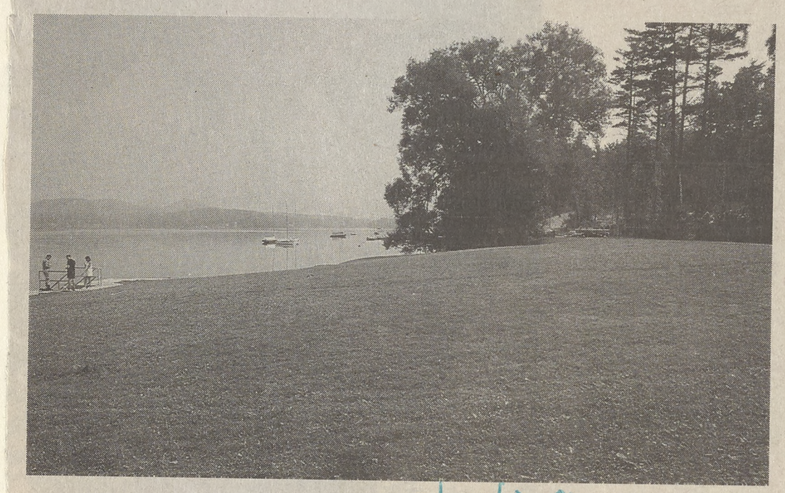
The commission member has objected in the past to pricey proposals for buildings at city parks. Nice facilities are important, says Smith, but money should be maximized to ensure that the public derives the most benefits.

Then & Now



Eagle Archives

People were making more use of this stretch of Pontoosuc Lake frontage around 1945, above, than they do today, below, despite this past week's hot weather. Building in the background, above, was the Blue Anchor Club, a social and bathing organization founded in 1929. Site was acquired by the city as a park in 1945. The Blue Anchor, showing damage by a fire, was razed the following year.



7/19/98 Joel Librizzi / Berkshire Eagle Staff



Photos by Bob McDonough / Berkshire Eagle Staff

By land and by sea — or at least by lake — youngsters take part in the cycling (below) and wading (above) portions of yesterday's third annual Iron Kids Triathlon at Onota Lake.

'Iron kids' race and enjoy

Annual triathlon draws 63 youngsters to Onota Lake

By Ryan Yanoshak
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD

Yesterday's third annual Jimmy Fund Iron Kids Triathlon at Onota Lake wasn't about winning cash prizes or pushing yourself to extreme limits.

The Iron Kids Triathlon, with children ages 3 through 12 participating, was about having fun. And the 63 finishers had a ball.

Partly sunny skies and warm water in Onota Lake helped ensure that kids competing in the event had a blast.

"I can't wait until next year," said Brian Paris, the top 6-year-old male finisher. "I can't feel my legs because I ran so hard, but this was fun."

"The kids love it," said Mark St. John, whose son, Mitchell, was competing in the age 3 and 4 group. "He thought it was great. This is the first time he's been in the triathlon and he's been waiting all week."

Organizer Tony Clement estimated 90 had registered for the race. Some didn't finish because of cramps, broken bike chains or just because they were tired.

Trophies were awarded to the top finishers in each age group for boys and girls and ribbons went to the second- and third-place winners.

Five separate races were run yesterday near Burbank Park; the distances varied according to age groups.

Each race started with a biking portion — a large number of the 3- and 4-year-old group

8/12/98 **IRON, continued on C3**



■ Iron from C1 8/12/98

still had training wheels on their bikes — followed by a run to the water. The youngest age groups, 3-4 and 5-6, waded in the water near the shore while the other age groups walked or swam through waist-deep water to reach the finish line. Each finisher was awarded a can of soda, and a 15-minute awards ceremony wrapped up the event.

"I like the challenge of three different things," 9-year-old Jeff Field said. "The water wasn't cold and I had fun."

Fun was the theme

The triathlon was designed to be fun and the kids participating left a lasting impression.

◗ Four-year-old Mitchell St. John learned to ride his bike without the training wheels just two days ago. St. John rode with confidence and a smile, and was the third 4-year-old finisher.

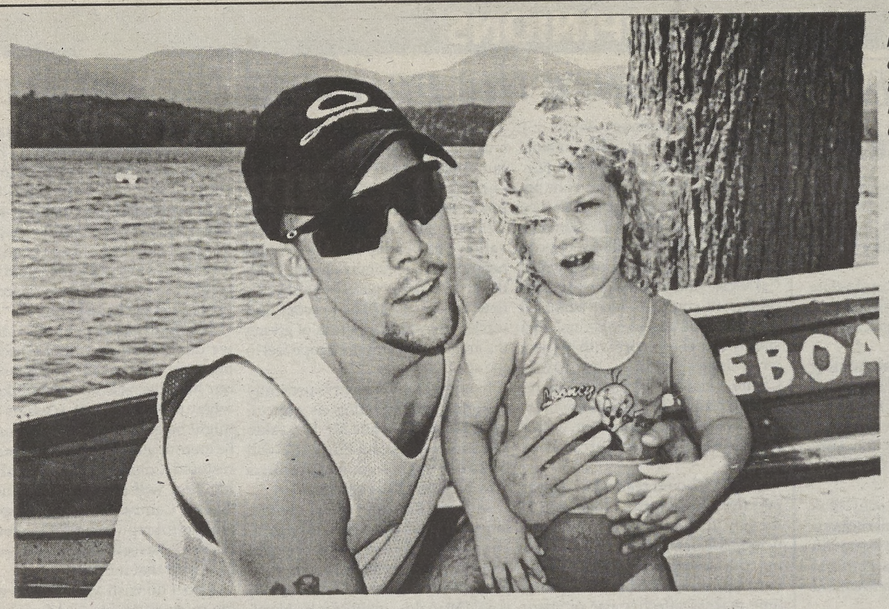
◗ Kristine Pezze fell during the running portion in the 5-and 6-year-old age group. After she fell, she cried a little but still finished the race and was the third 6-year-old finisher. Twenty minutes later, her skinned knee was patched up and she was helping the older kids in the water portion of the event.

"She fine now," said her mother, Kathy. "She had a good time and she finished."

◗ Silver Deutch, a standout swimmer at the YMCA, was all set to make a run in the swimming portion — she even had a swimming cap on — but was disappointed she had to walk, rather than swim, through the lake.

While fun was the theme, trophies were presented to the age group winners. Top finishers are listed on the Scoreboard, Page C2.

"The kids love it, the parents love it. It's just a good time," added Clement.



The sun was hot, the water was cool and the beach at Onota Lake was crowded on Wednesday afternoon. Many families took advantage of the opportunity for fun in the sun. Here, Devon Bigelow took an interest in a lifeboat, while her dad, Robert, kept an eye on her.

BEACH WEATHER



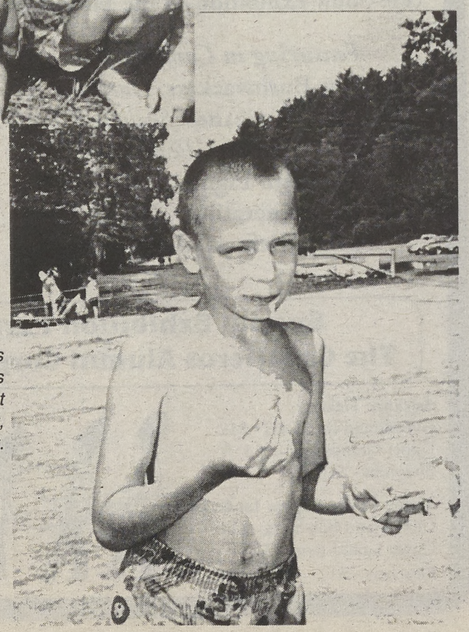
A summer meltdown: A dismayed Elizabeth Hillard watched plaintively as the searing sun claimed her popsicle.



Let's face it, wet sand just feels good. James Holmes and Morgan Rochelo enjoyed some beach excavation, and found a great way to keep cool.



Serene-looking lifeguard Carrie Messer keeps a watchful eye on the Onota Lake beach.



When the temperature climbs near 90 degrees, as it has this week, ice cream is a perfect treat. But you have to eat fast, as Matthew Hillard can attest.

Photos by Anthony Fyden

The Berkshire Eagle, Wednesday, August 19, 1998

Burbank Park renovation work is scheduled for mid-September

By D.R. Bahlman
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — Work on improvements at Burbank Park is expected to be under way by mid-September, a city official said yesterday.

Robert S. Mellace, the city's director of community services, said that D.R. Billings Inc. of Lanesboro is the apparent low bidder on the project, which includes paving the south parking lot, extension of the boat launch "pad" farther into Onota Lake, and replacement and repair of the railings on the fishing pier. The pier will be brought into compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act.

The bid figure

Billings' bid was $868,980. That also includes paving a handicapped-accessible walkway along the lake shore from the bath house to the south parking lot, reconstruction of the portion of Lakeway Drive that is situated within the park, paving and reconstruction of the north parking lot, and reconstruction of the beach in front of the bath house, said Mellace.

The work will be funded by a combination of grants, money from the city, and reimbursement programs.

Specifically, the Massachusetts Public Access Board, an arm of the state Division of Fisheries and Wildlife charged with improving public access to waterways in the state, will pay the entire $207,000 cost of improvements to the fishing pier and boat launch, the paving of the south parking lot, and the paving of an "apron" leading to an overflow parking lot situated above the south parking lot, said Mellace.

Money from a community development block grant will fund the construction of the handicapped-accessible walkway along the lake shore and any related improvements, such as curb cut ramps. The cost of that work is estimated at $55,000, he said.

A $500,000 grant from the state Division of Conservation Services will reimburse 68 percent of the cost of the remaining improvements at the park; the city will fund the remaining 32 percent. The grant will also cover about $80,000 in design costs, Mellace said.

The value of the projects to be funded by grants and city money amounts to $607,000, he said. The total amount of funding available from all sources is $997,000 — leaving about $128,000 between the cost of the project and Billings' bid.

Mellace noted, however, that the design costs must be subtracted from that "cushion," leaving about $48,000 to meet contingencies.

Room for error

"Obviously, a project of this scale must carry a contingency," he said.

When it's finished, the work will represent the first phase of improvements at Burbank Park, said Mellace.

"Unless we're able to uncover another funding source, that'll probably be the limit of what we're able to accomplish in this phase," he said. "We knew from the beginning that we wouldn't have enough to do everything that needs to be done."

Restoration of the southern swimming beach, improvements to the park's front entrance, construction of a restroom pavilion and development of the pumping station site into a scenic overlook are some of the items on the "wish list," Mellace said.

Formal acceptance of Billings' bid must await review by the city's purchasing department, he said.

Two other contractors, Petricca Construction Co. and J.H. Maxymillian Inc., submitted bids of $880,000 and $929,234.85, respectively, said Mellace.

"Even though we can't accomplish all of the improvements originally proposed or hoped for by a lot of people, this will make a significant improvement to the park," he said. "We don't plan to quit here. We'll continue to seek additional funds."



Jared Leeds / Berkshire Eagle Staf

Pittsfield pitcher Brendan Welteroth (9) covers home plate, but it's too late to prevent Westfield's Mike Sullivan, left, from scoring on a wild pitch in first inning of yesterday's Babe Ruth tournament action in Dalton.

7/19/98

Westfield 15, Pittsfield 8

Nine errors and 11 walks spelled disaster for the county champs, who had to restrict ace Matt Mazzer to second base duties after the fireballer pitched seven innings in a house league game on Thursday night.

"Matt pitched two days ago, and I can't send a kid back out there two days later," said Pittsfield manager Dennis Murphy. "The walks and errors are what killed us. I still think we'll be playing on Thursday [in the final], though."

Westfield tied the game at 8-8 in the fourth on a solo homer by Tom Naro and took the lead for good with four more runs in the fifth. Tim Corker hit a two-run homer in the fifth and Naro and Jeremy Laverto added RBI hits.

Both teams scored three times in the first inning, but Pittsfield answered with five more runs in the second to take an 8-3 lead. Jim Losaw had run-scoring hits in both innings and Ryan Elser added a two-run single and Mazzer an RBI single in the second.

Matt Oshiniski pitched 6⅔ innings in relief to get the win for Westfield. He allowed just one hit after the second inning and retired 19 of the final 21 batters he faced.

Pittsfield Babe Ruth meetings set

Pittsfield Babe Ruth League organizers will meet on Thursday at 7 p.m. at Springside House, 874 North St., to discuss preparations for the 1998 season.

Candidates interested in coaching or helping to administer in the 13-year-old or the 14-15 leagues are welcome.

Candidates who cannot attend the meeting should call the Pittsfield Recreation Department (499-9343) or Dan DeSantis (499-0841).

3/31/98

Pittsfield Babe Ruth signups are set

Registration for the Pittsfield Babe Ruth age 13 and 14-15 leagues will be held on Saturday, April 4, at Springside House, 874 North Street, from 9 until noon. Tryout information will be announced at a later date.

3/19/98

Babe Ruth seeks players, coaches

The Pittsfield Babe Ruth baseball program will continue registration for its age 13 and age 14-15 divisions through tryouts April 25. A tryout schedule will be announced later. Players who missed sign-up sessions may register at Springside House, 874 North St., Mondays through Fridays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Coaches are still needed for the age 14-15 division. Information: Mike Toner (443-0951) or Dan DeSantis (499-0841).

4/10/98

Pittsfield Babe Ruth tryouts set

The Pittsfield Babe Ruth Baseball program has scheduled tryouts at the Pittsfield Common on First Street for the 1998 season.

Tryouts for 13-year-olds, numbers 1-50, will be Saturday from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., and for numbers 51 and above Sunday from noon to 3:30. Tryouts will be April 29 at 6 p.m. for pitchers and other 13s who miss the weekend tryouts.

Tryouts for age 14-15 players, numbers 1-40, will be Saturday from 1 to 4 p.m. and for numbers 41 and above Sunday at 4 p.m. Tryouts will be April 30 at 6 p.m. for pitchers and those who miss weekend tryouts.

4/21/98

Babe Ruth ticket sale Sunday

The Pittsfield Babe Ruth League has scheduled its annual season ticket sale Sunday . Players will go door-to-door from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. A season ticket is $1, with proceeds funding league expenses.

5/7/98

Pittsfield Babe Ruth opens Sunday

The Pittsfield Babe Ruth baseball program is scheduled to kick off its season Sunday with doubleheaders at Benedict Field and Deming Park.

The 13-year-old division begins at Benedict, with KB vs. Italian American at 1 p.m., followed by IUE 255 vs. Gillette-Lipton. The age 14-15 division begins at Deming, with Gildo's Auto Body vs. Reynolds Team Sales at 1, followed by VFW vs. GE. Also at 1 p.m., there will be a single game at Reid Middle School featuring GEAA vs. Oliver-Impress.

A collection to benefit the Jimmy Fund will be taken during each game.

5/15/98

Pittsfield opens up with easy tourney win

Babe Ruth 14-15s

NORTH ADAMS — Pittsfield opened the District 1 Babe Ruth age 14-15 baseball tournament with a bang last night at Joe Wolfe Field, beating South Berkshire 10-0, in a game stopped after five innings by the 10-run mercy rule.

Matt Mazzer was a veritable one-man wrecking crew for Pittsfield, with a single, a double, a triple and five runs batted in. He also tossed four shutout innings, giving up just a third inning single to South Berkshire's Dave Matz. Mazzer didn't walk a batter and struck out 10.

Pittsfield put the game away in the bottom of the second inning, scoring six runs off of losing pitcher Joe DelSoldato.

Pittsfield added three runs in the third inning and one in the fifth.

Jim Losaw had a triple for Pittsfield, while Brandon Welteroth had a single, an RBI, three stolen bases and scored three runs. Welteroth also pitched the fifth inning, striking out two.

Pittsfield moves on tonight, playing South Central at 8 in the second half of a twinbill at Joe Wolfe Field. The host team, North Adams, will play Adams in the 5:30 opener.

7/7/98

Wet weather stops Babe Ruth 13s play

County 14-15 tourney pushed back

NORTH ADAMS — Rain and wet grounds last night forced postponement of both games scheduled to be played in the Berkshire County 13-year-old Babe Ruth Baseball Tournament at Joe Wolfe Field.

Both loser's bracket games were rescheduled for this evening, with South-Central vs. Adams at 5:30 and Dalton vs. defending champion Pittsfield at 8 p.m.

The postponements had a ripple effect on the rest of the tournament schedule at Joe Wolfe Field. The winner's bracket game between North Adams and South Berkshire is now scheduled for tomorrow at 5:30 p.m., and the next round of the loser's bracket is at 8 p.m.

The loser's bracket final was pushed back to Sunday at 1 p.m., with the championship game to follow. If the loser's bracket team wins that game, the winner-take-all final will be Monday at 8 p.m.

Age 14-15 tournament

The changes in the age 13 tournament has forced changes in the age 14-15 Berkshire County Babe Ruth tournament also scheduled at Joe Wolfe Field.

Defending champion Pittsfield heads a five-team field that will compete in that tournament, which now is scheduled to begin Sunday at Joe Wolfe Field.

The double-elimination tournament was supposed to open tomorrow, but has been pushed back due to last night's rainouts in the age 13 tournament.

The age 14-15 tournament now opens with Pittsfield vs. South Berkshire Sunday at 5:30 p.m. The tournament continues Wednesday with North Adams vs. Adams and South Central vs. the Pittsfield-South Berkshire winner.

The tournament continues through July 11, with the championship game scheduled at 1 p.m., and the "if" game to follow if the loser's bracket team wins at 1.

The winner advances to a state tournament which will be hosted by Dalton beginning July 18.

7/2/98

Kay Bee, IUE face Pittsfield 13s showdown

PITTSFIELD — Kay Bee Toys and IUE 255 have split the first two games of their best-of-three championship series in the Pittsfield Babe Ruth 13-year-old league, forcing a winner-take-all final tomorrow at 1 p.m. at Benedict Field.

Kay Bee won Wednesday's opener 7-4, as Mike Welch had two hits, Steve Papa hit a double and drove in two runs and Katie Pierce pitched four innings of hitless relief. Jeremy Jandreau had two hits and an RBI for IUE.

Last night, Brad Shove pitched a shutout, tripled and drove in a run as IUE posted a 5-0 win. Tarrelle Banks drove in two runs. Papa doubled in a losing cause.

7/7/98

N. Adams, Pittsfield advance in tourney

Babe Ruth 14-15

NORTH ADAMS — Mark Gazaille laid down a perfect suicide squeeze bunt to score John Cooper in the fifth inning and winning pitcher Aaron Herr protected the lead as North Adams defeated Adams 2-1 yesterday in the District 1 Babe Ruth age 14-15 baseball tournament.

Adams led 1-0 in the second inning but North Adams scored twice in the fifth, capped by Gazaille's bunt.

Also last night, Brendan Welteroth and Chris Markham combined for a two-hitter to lead Pittsfield past South Central 14-0 in a game halted by the 10-run mercy rule after five innings.

North Adams 2, Adams 1

Adams took its only lead of the game in the second inning. Dayne Poirot singled, Dan Mange doubled to put runners on second and third and Poirot scored on a wild pitch.

North Adams came back in the fifth. With one out, Tim Larson reached on an error and Cooper bunted his way on. Losing pitcher Jeff Savary tried to get Larson at second but the throw was not in time. Both runners advanced on a wild pitch and Larson crossed home on another wild pitch to tie the game. Then, with a full count and one out, Gazaille laid down a bunt as Cooper crossed home with the winning run.

Herr was the winning pitcher, scattering five hits and striking out nine.

Savary took the loss, despite allowing just one hit, a single by Tha Chum in the fifth. He walked seven and struck out four.

Poirot was the only multiple hitter in the contest with two singles.

Pittsfield 14, S. Central 0

Pittsfield scored four runs in the first inning in this game and never looked back, winning its second consecutive game by at least 10 runs.

Pittsfield opened the tournament with a 10-0 victory over South Berkshire and last night scored runs in all five at-bats.

Welteroth started for Pittsfield, throwing four innings, walking three and allowing both hits. Markham threw the last inning and struck out all three hitters he faced.

South Central starter Joe Deveneau took the loss, with three innings pitched.

Mike Barcus had a two-run single in the first inning that sparked Pittsfield to a 4-0 lead. Pittsfield scored three more runs in the second, one in the third, two in the fourth and four in the fifth. Matt Mazzer tripled in a run in the second and also singled and Jeff Quetti singled three times for Pittsfield.

Tim Face had a leadoff double and Deveneau singled in the fifth for the South Central hits.

7/8/98

Babe Ruth 13s tourney opens tonight in N. Adams

Defending champion Pittsfield heads a six-team field as the Berkshire County 13-year-old Babe Ruth baseball tournament kicks off tonight at Joe Wolfe Field in North Adams.

Two games tonight open the double-elimination tournament, which continues through July 5 with all games at Joe Wolfe Field. The tournament champion advances to the regional tournament in Douglas.

Tonight's games feature Dalton vs. South Central at 5:30 and Pittsfield vs. Adams at 8. Tomorrow, the Dalton-South Central winner plays North Adams and the Pittsfield-Adams winner plays South Berkshire.

Games continue with doubleheaders scheduled Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. The championship game will be Sunday at 1, followed by the "if necessary" game if the loser's bracket team wins.

6/27/98

Adams, Pittsfield earn wins

7/10/98

NORTH ADAMS — Pittsfield and Adams advanced in the Babe Ruth age 14-15 tournament last night at Joe Wolfe Field with 10-run victories.

Pittsfield scored three runs in four different innings to defeat North Adams 12-2 in a game called after six innings by the 10-run mercy rule.

Babe Ruth 14-15

Adams scored four runs in the first inning and went on to beat South Berkshire 14-2 in a game called after five innings by the mercy rule.

In the opener, North Adams took a 2-0 lead in the top of the first inning but Pittsfield scored three runs in the bottom of the first, three in the third, three in the fifth and three more in the sixth.

North Adams had both of its hits in the first inning. Matt Wooliver singled to score Mark Gazaille who singled. Aaron Herr scored the other run on an error.

North Adams had nine walks in the game, including three to start the game which led to Brendan Welteroth's three-run double.

In the Pittsfield third, Jim Losaw knocked in two runs with a single to right and then scored on an error.

Ryan Elser had two hits for Pittsfield and knocked in two runs. Losaw had two hits, a single and triple, and scored three times.

Matt Mazzer was the winning pitcher, throwing six innings and allowing just two hits. He struck out 10, including five straight at one point.

Matt Modovick took the loss, working five innings before giving way to Bryan Borowski who threw the final inning.

In the nightcap, Robert Crouse singled in a run and Jesse Soldo knocked in two more with a double, after a bases loaded walk to give Adams a 4-0 lead after the first inning.

Adams added two more runs in the second when Jeff Savory scored on a wild pitch, Dayne Piorot singled in a run and then scored on a wild pitch.

Matt Larabee led the Adams offense with two hits, three runs scored and two runs batted in.

Robert Krause started for Adams before giving way to Piorot in the third inning.

Keith Goodburn had a run scoring double for South Berkshire, which was eliminated from the tournament, in the fourth inning.

Pittsfield advances in 13s event

Squeeze bunt in 7th caps four-run rally

NORTH ADAMS — John Phelps delivered a game-winning squeeze bunt to cap a four-run rally in the final inning Friday night as Pittsfield came back from a three-run deficit to defeat Adams 8-7 in the Berkshire County Babe Ruth 13-year-old tournament at Joe Wolfe Field.

Babe Ruth

Pittsfield had surrendered four runs in the top of the seventh before Phelps came out of the bullpen to close the inning. He ended up getting the win.

The victory enabled defending champion Pittsfield to avenge an 8-3 opening-round loss to Adams.

The loss eliminated Adams from the tournament, and delivered Pittsfield into today's 1 p.m. loser's-bracket final against South Berkshire at Joe Wolfe Field. The winner will then play unbeaten North Adams. If North Adams wins, it takes the title. If the loser's-bracket survivor wins, it will force a winner-take-all final tomorrow at 8 p.m. at Joe Wolfe Field.

Last-inning rally

Friday, things were looking bleak for Pittsfield when Adams used three hits, two Pittsfield errors and four walks to score four runs in the top of the seventh to go ahead 7-4.

But in the bottom of the seventh, Pittsfield erupted with one out. Huck Correia delivered a two-run single and Katie Pierce hit an RBI single to tie the game. With runners on second and third and one strike against him, Phelps executed the squeeze bunt to bring home the winning run.

"It was one of those nights where when it was over, you just sit on the bench and go 'whew'," Pittsfield coach Buck Kendall said.

Conor Storie had two of Pittsfield's six hits. For Adams, which had 10 hits, Mitch Belanger had three hits and Russ Belanger and Bill Nylic two each.

Babe Ruth exhibition slated at Clapp

8/14-98

A Pittsfield Babe Ruth team is scheduled to play the Mohawk Valley Diamond Baseball team, a traveling team from Utica, N.Y., in an exhibition doubleheader tomorrow at noon at Clapp Park.

The Pittsfield team is made of 13-, 14- and 15-year-old players.

Pittsfield retains Ruth title

Age 14-15 stars nip N. Adams 3-2 to win 3rd straight

By Ryan Yanoshak
Berkshire Eagle Staff

NORTH ADAMS — Pittsfield won its first three games of the District 1 age 14-15 Babe Ruth Tournament by at least 10 runs to advance to the championship game.

Yesterday in the title game against North Adams at Joe Wolfe Field, the game was much closer, but the result was the same.

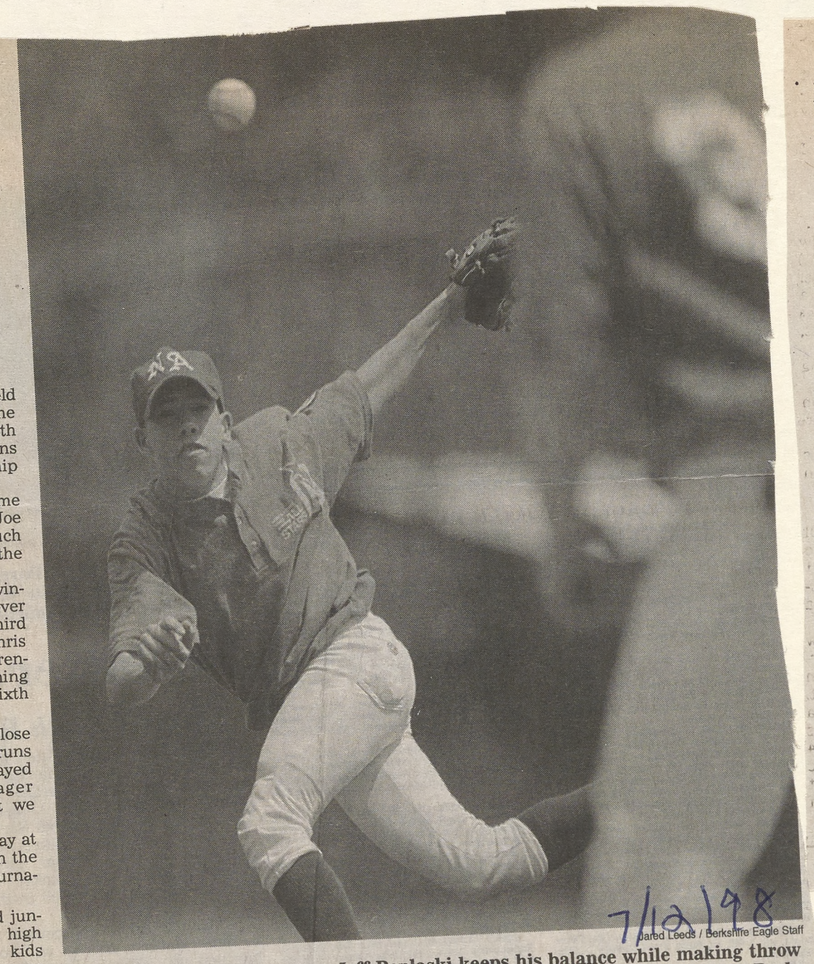
Pittsfield continued its winning ways with a 3-2 win over North Adams to win its third straight sectional title, as Chris Markham singled home Brendan Welteroth with the winning run in the bottom of the sixth inning.

"We didn't expect a close game. We beat them by 10 runs [12-2] the first time we played them," Pittsfield manager Dennis Murphy said. "But we have a very solid team."

Pittsfield will play Saturday at Pinegrove Park in Dalton in the first round of the state tournament against Westfield.

"Most of our kids played junior varsity or varsity in high school and we have four kids who play American Legion, so we're going to give them two days off," Murphy said. "We got

RUTH, continued on C3



Jared Leeds / Berkshire Eagle Staff

North Adams second baseman Jeff Poplaski keeps his balance while making throw to first baseman Matt Wooliver during yesterday's 14-6 win over Adams in Berkshire County Babe Ruth age 14-15 tournament loser's bracket final.

7/12/98

Ruth from C1

the first leg of this thing, now we have to get through states."

North Adams won earlier

Earlier yesterday, North Adams rallied for seven runs in the sixth inning to defeat Adams 14-6 in the loser's bracket final, earning a trip to the title game.

Three Pittsfield pitchers limited Adams to two hits to advance Pittsfield into the state tournament.

Welteroth was the winning pitcher, throwing 5⅓ innings and allowing both hits and runs. Dave Galvagni got the last two outs of the sixth inning and Jim Losaw threw the final inning for the save.

"We have great depth," Murphy said. "We're deep with pitchers and catchers. There are 15 kids on this team and anyone can play anywhere."

Aaron Herr was the losing pitcher, allowing seven hits and striking out six.

North Adams scored two runs in the first, on no hits. Matt Lamb reached on an error and Tha Chum and Mark Gazaille both walked to load the bases. Lamb scored on a passed ball and Chum scored when Herr grounded out to second for the first out of the inning.

Pittsfield tied the game in the home half of the first. With one out, Jeff Quetti and Matt Mazzer walked. Ryan Elser knocked in Quetti with a single that moved Mazzer to third. Mazzer scored on a wild pitch to tie the game at 2-2.

The game remained tied until the sixth, although Pittsfield had its chances to score.

Pittsfield had two runners thrown out at third and a runner nailed at the plate trying to score. Quetti was thrown out by Gazaille trying to steal and Jared Flaherty was out at third when Chris DeSanty threw him out from left field as Flaherty tried to go from first to third on a single by Galvagni.

Elser was caught at the plate trying to score in the third when Chum, playing right field for Adams, fielded a single by Welteroth, threw to Matt Wocliver, the first baseman, who threw a strike to the plate to Gazaille to get Elser for the third out of the inning.

Pittsfield scored the winning run in the sixth. With one out, Welteroth singled to right and stole second. He came around to score when Markham, into the game for Mike Barcus, singled to right.

7/12/98

Loser's bracket final

North Adams' bats started slow against Adams in the first game. North Adams trailed 6-2 going into the top of the sixth, but scored seven runs on just two hits to go ahead 9-6.



Jared Leeds / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Race to the plate finds Adams catcher David Paquette, left, reaching for the ball to tag out North Adams' Matt Wooliver in a close play during fourth inning of yesterday's Berkshire County age 14-15 Babe Ruth tournament loser's bracket final in North Adams.

IUE 255 wins Pittsfield Babe Ruth 13s title, 6-2

PITTSFIELD — Chris Brown pitched a five-hitter and Tarrelle Banks drove in three runs with a double and two singles yesterday as IUE 255 clinched the championship of the Pittsfield Babe Ruth 13-year-old League with a 6-2 win over KB Toys in the rubber game of their three-game league playoff.

KB won Wednesday's opener 7-4, and IUE won Thursday's second game 5-0.

Brown had two hits and drove in a run for IUE, which jumped ahead 3-0 in the first inning and never looked back. Jeff Bashara and Jeremy Jandreau also had two hits each in the win.

For KB, Paul Boyd went 3-for-3 and Katie Pierce hit a triple. Steve Papa took the pitching loss.

The game was not without controversy, however, as the league's umpires walked off the field after a player was hit in the helmet by a pitch, but was allowed to stay in the game.

"In the second inning a player from KB was hit by a pitch in the helmet, which knocked him down and dazed him," umpire-in-chief Dan Cook explained. "As the umpire-in-chief, I told the coach the player was not to play for health and safety reason. I had a workshop in head trauma and you should be very cautious. The coach insisted on the player playing, and I insisted that he couldn't play."

Pittsfield Babe Ruth officials ruled that the player could continue, however, and "as a result, the entire crew refused to umpire from that point on and we walked off the field," Cook said.

The game was completed with volunteer umpires, including Pittsfield Babe Ruth official James Hassett.

7/19/98

State tournaments

Reardon to help Dalton kick off Babe Ruth 14-15 event tomorrow

DALTON — Dalton native and former Major League pitching star Jeff Reardon is scheduled to throw out the ceremonial first pitch, and both Berkshire County teams will be in action as the Western Massachusetts State age 14-15 Babe Ruth Baseball Tournament kicks off tomorrow at Pinegrove Park.

The event begins at 1 p.m. when Reardon throws out the first pitch and Katie Walzyk, who sang earlier this year at Fenway Park in Boston, sings the national anthem. Festivities also include a spaghetti supper today from 5 to 6 p.m. and a concert tomorrow at 6 p.m., both at the Dalton CRA. The public is welcome at all events.

Baseball begins with Berkshire County tournament champion Pittsfield playing Westfield tomorrow at 1 p.m., and host Dalton playing West Side at 4:30. The six-team, double-elimination tournament continues Sunday with Shrewsbury playing the Pittsfield-Westfield winner at 1 and Central playing the West Side-Dalton winner at 4:30.

There will be two more games on both Monday and Tuesday, with the loser's bracket final Wednesday at 1 p.m. and the championship game Thursday at 1. If the loser's bracket team wins on Thursday, a winner-take-all final will follow at 4:30.

The tournament champion qualifies for the New England regional tournament Aug. 1-7 in Goffstown, N.H.

7/17/98

Pittsfield Babe Ruth eliminates Dalton

Beats the host team in 5 innings with 13-run 4th inning

7/21/98

DALTON — Pittsfield Babe Ruth coach Dennis Murphy wasn't being cocky when he predicted his team would be in Thursday's age 14-15 Babe Ruth Western Mass. State title game despite losing its first game.

Rather, the veteran coach was confident his team would get good pitching and continued offensive production.

Murphy got both good pitching and lots of offense from his team yesterday as Pittsfield defeated Dalton 29-1, in a game called by the 10-run mercy rule after five innings at Pinegrove Park.

Pittsfield will continue its quest to the title game today at 4:30 against West Side, 8-7 winners over Shrewsbury in the second game at Pinegrove.

Dalton, the host team, and Shrewsbury were eliminated with the losses.

Pittsfield scored four runs in the first inning, and put the game away with a 13-run fourth inning before the game was called after five innings when it scored eight runs.

Two Pittsfield pitchers teamed to hold Dalton to just two hits and Pittsfield benefited from offensive production from up and down its order.

Good start

In the top of the first, Dave Galvagni drew a walk. One out later, Matt Mazzer hit a long double to left- center field to score Galvagni. Mazzer and Ryan Elser drew back-to-back walks to load the bases. Jim Losaw drew another walk to force in Mazzer. With two outs, Chris Markham hit a bad-hop single past Tom Murray, the Dalton shortstop, for a 4-0 Pittsfield lead.

Pittsfield went ahead by five in the second when Mazzer hit an inside-the-park home run down the line in right field.

Dalton scored in the home half of the second when Mike Sheenan walked with the bases loaded to force in Murray, who also had walked.

Pittsfield added to its lead in the third. Shane Rose hit a single to center to score two runs and Galvagni hit a run-scoring single for an 8-1 lead.

13-run 4th

In the top of the fourth, Pittsfield scored 13 runs. Losaw had a run-scoring single, Jared Flaherty hit a sacrifice fly, Jeff Quetti knocked in two runs with a single, and Mazzer singled in a run before Murphy went to his bench. Mike Pieropan hit a three-run home run in the fifth.

Mazzer went the first three innings for Pittsfield, walking three and allowing two hits. Dave Galvagni finished up with two innings of hitless relief.

Dalton starter Phil Swift took the loss, allowing 10 runs in three-plus innings.

West Side advances

West Side scored the winning run in the top of the seventh when Derek Card singled and scored on a single by A.J. Card.

West Side took a 6-0 lead after the first. Three of those runs came courtesy of a home run by Card, who also had two singles.

Pittsfield beaten

DALTON — West Side defeated Pittsfield 6-5 yesterday to eliminate Pittsfield from the age 14-15 Babe Ruth Western Massachusetts State Tournament at Pinegrove Park.

Babe Ruth 14-15 Tourney

Pittsfield, which lost to Westfield in its first game, scored two runs in the top of the seventh but couldn't complete the comeback, leaving the bases loaded.

Also yesterday, Westfield defeated Central 10-2.

Early lead

Pittsfield took a 2-0 lead after two innings when losing pitcher Brendan Welteroth doubled and Jim Losaw drew a walk. One out later, Dave Galvagni singled to score both.

Pittsfield went ahead 3-0 in the top of the first when Matt Mazzer walked and scored on an error.

West Side scored four runs in the bottom of the third and added two more in the fifth for a 6-3 lead.

Pittsfield made it close in the top of the seventh. With one out, Jeff Quetti tripled and scored on a Mazzer single. Ryan Elser followed with a single to score Mazzer, but Pittsfield couldn't get any closer.

Ed Freehart, in relief of Chris Wyman, was the winning pitcher, throwing 3⅓ innings. Ed Guardiola threw the last inning and earned the save.

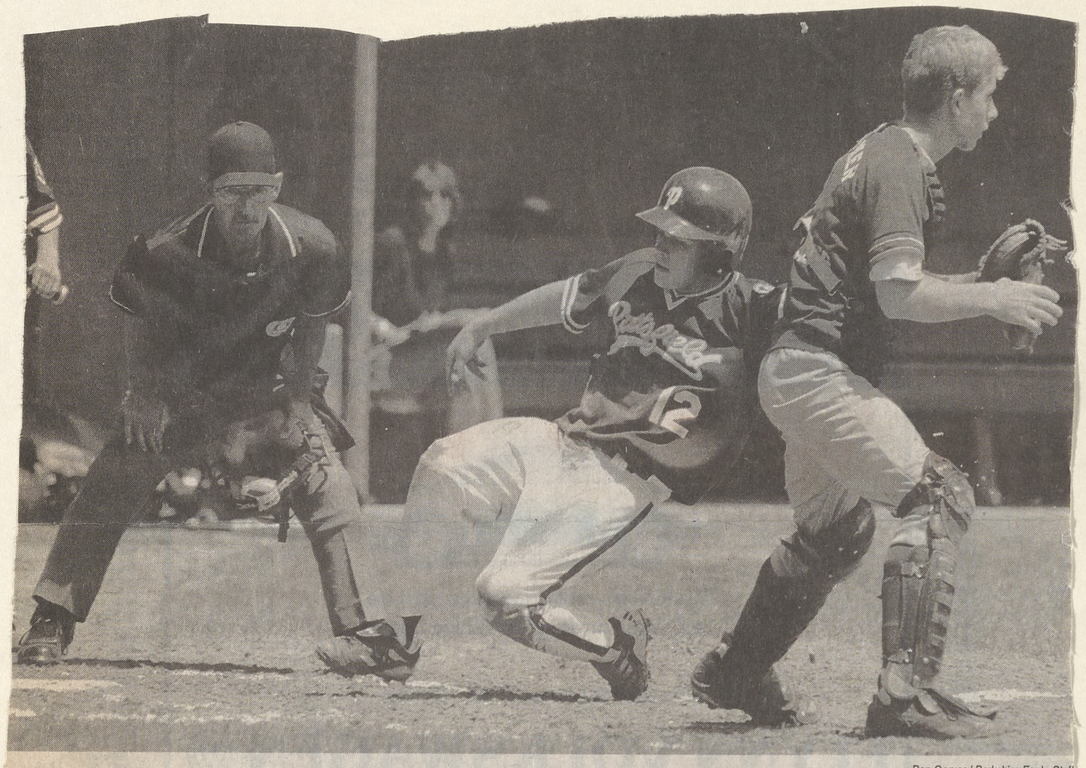
7/22/98

Pittsfield Babe Ruth meets Wednesday

The Pittsfield Babe Ruth Baseball League has scheduled a meeting Wednesday at 7 p.m. at Springside House, 874 North St. Anyone interested in helping the league in any capacity is welcome. Coaches are needed in the 13-year-old divisions, and there are also possible openings in the age 14-15 division.

Interested volunteers who can't attend the meeting should contact the Pittsfield Recreation Department (499-9468) or Dan DeSantis (499-0841) or any board member.

2/15/98



Ben Garver / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Pittsfield's Brian Hanley (12) slides in safely while South Berkshire catcher Andrew Kiriakedes awaits the throw as umpire Tom Dietlin watches in third inning of yesterday's Babe Ruth 13-year-old tournament game. Pittsfield advanced to the championship game with a 12-6 win, but then lost 7-2 to North Adams in the final.

North Adams wins county 13s title

Home team beats Pittsfield 7-2 to complete Babe Ruth sweep

By Ryan Yanoshak
Berkshire Eagle Staff

NORTH ADAMS — Pittsfield baseball all-stars are starting to dread the sight of Jesse Boillat on the pitching mound.

Last year, it was Boillat who pitched a perfect game in the Berkshire County Little League championship game to lead North Adams to a 10-0 win over Pittsfield South.

Yesterday, Boillat pitched a six-hitter and North Adams scored in every inning but one en route to a 7-2 win over Pittsfield in the championship game of the Berkshire County age 13 Babe Ruth Tournament at Joe Wolfe Field.

North Adams, which went through the tournament unbeaten, will play next weekend in the sectional tournament in Douglas against an opponent to be determined.

Pittsfield, the two-time defending champion, had beaten South Berkshire 12-6 earlier yesterday in the losers' bracket final, then came back 45 minutes later to play North Adams.

North Adams took advantage of five Pittsfield errors and racked up 10 hits to

7/6/98

BABE, continued on C3



Ben Garver / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Umpire Tom Dietlin makes the emphatic call as South Berkshire's Darren Korte (20) is tagged out by Pittsfield catcher Brad Shove in yesterday's Babe Ruth 13-year-old tournament contest in North Adams.

7/6/98

Babe from C1

win its first title since 1995.

"This is a very confident bunch," North Adams manager Tom Rumbolt said. "They played together last year as 12-year-old all-stars and have played well in this tournament, and that adds to the confidence."

Big day for Boillat

Boillat went the distance for North Adams, walking two and striking out two. He also had three hits and knocked in two runs.

North Adams leadoff hitter Matt Luczynski scored three runs and had two hits. Ryan Tondreau scored twice and Nathan Herr knocked in two runs.

North Adams didn't take long to score, pushing across a run in its first at-bat. Luczynski led off with a single and stole second. One out later, Boillat singled for the first time and Luczynski went to third before scoring on the first Pittsfield error.

Pittsfield tied the game in the second. Huck Correia led off the inning with the first of his three hits and stole second and third. One out later, John Phelps grounded out to shortstop to score Correia.

North Adams went ahead for good in the second. Tondreau beat out an infield single to start the inning and stole second. Following a strikeout, Herr singled to right to knock in Tondreau.

"It's nice to know you can count on your pitching," Rumbolt said. "We know our pitchers will hold them down until our offense gets going and we're also confident when we're ahead that they will hold the lead."

North Adams put the game away in the home half of the third, scoring four runs to take a 6-1 lead. With one out, Jeff Bourdon reached on an error, went to second on a bad pickoff throw and scored when Boillat singled to right. Boillat stole second and went to third when the throw trying to get him at second sailed into center field. With two outs, Tondreau reached on the fourth Pittsfield error of the inning to score Boillat. Tondreau then stole second and crossed home on Gardner's single. Gardner stole second and scored on a single by Herr for a five-run advantage.

"No matter who we were playing, we knew it would be tough," Rumbolt said. "You just never know what will happen. We hit the ball well and beat the defending champions."

Pittsfield got a run back in the fourth when Brad Shove doubled, went to third on a balk and scored on Correia's second hit of the game, a single to left.

North Adams didn't score in the fifth but added a run in the sixth when Luczynski doubled, went to third on an infield single by Bourdon and scored on a balk.

Pittsfield starter Chris Brown took the loss, throwing five innings and allowing nine runs. Phelps threw the last two innings for Pittsfield.

Pittsfield's earlier win

Pittsfield scored nine runs in the first three innings in its 12-6 win over South Berkshire.

Steve Papa had two hits and scored three runs to lead Pittsfield. Shove and Brian Hanley had two hits, scored twice and knocked in a run apiece.

Papa was also the winning pitcher, throwing five innings in relief of Shove. Papa allowed eight hits and four runs and struck out two.

Andrew Kiriakedes had three hits for South Berkshire, scored twice and knocked in two runs. Shaun Van Alpher knocked in two runs. Van Alphen, the South Berkshire starter, took the loss with three innings pitched. Brian Smith and Kiriakedes finished up, each with two innings of work.